

**A CASE STUDY OF LITERACY DEVELOPMENT  
THROUGH WHOLE LANGUAGE IN A TENTH-GRADE  
LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM**

**A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the School of Education  
Drake University**

**In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education**

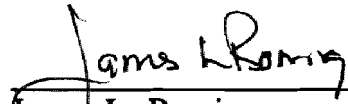
**by Sharon Ashman Flora  
September 1995**

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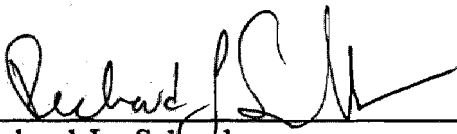
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# A CASE STUDY OF LITERACY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH WHOLE LANGUAGE IN A TENTH-GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM

An abstract of a Dissertation by  
Sharon Ashman Flora  
September 1995  
Drake University  
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The problem. The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe and document the perceptions of twenty-two tenth-grade English students and their two language arts teachers as they implemented Atwell's whole language reading/writing workshop approach toward the development of true literacy, which was defined in this study as the ability to use critical thinking skills to solve problems.

Procedures. The researcher was a participant observer in the classroom approximately twice a week, one hour a day for an 18 week period. In this case study, theory was grounded in the contextual descriptions that the students and teachers revealed through interviews, portfolios, journals, and observations of their learning to be readers and writers. Relationships between whole language and active learning were examined through changing teacher roles, changing student roles, and changing student concepts.

Findings. Finds of this study showed that the Atwell reading/writing model is a successful vehicle for literacy development. Teachers and students adopted new roles enabling them to become more effective problem solvers. There was a collaborative effort between student and teacher to choose meaningful content, benchmarks for success, and evidence of student self-reflection. This pedagogy combined curriculum, instruction and assessment in an integrated way to support students in their active construction of knowledge and meaning as they used self-regulated, creative and critical thinking.

Conclusions. The conclusions of this study were that students have to be active participants in a constructive learning environment to produce authentic products; teachers must perceive of themselves as facilitators rather than controllers of learning; students must perceive that they have been given the trust to make appropriate choices about their literacy development; and each student must be able to reflect upon and to develop his or her individual literacy.

Recommendations. The model was applied with success in this one classroom providing clear evidence that there are implications for future studies: (a) Whole language helps students learn. (b) Authenticity is an essential aspect of whole language. (c) Whole language and authentic assessment involve student interaction. (d) Teacher evaluation should be focused on learning instead of assigning grades.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

...We must constantly remind ourselves that the ultimate purpose of evaluation is to enable students to evaluate themselves.

Arthur L. Costa (1989)

There is a growing awareness that, by the year 2000, America's global market competitiveness may be dependent upon a work force that is largely undereducated. Employers already report difficulty in finding job applicants with necessary skills for increasing technological requirements (Bishop, 1989). This skills gap will continue if education in America is not restructured to meet the competitive demands of an international marketplace. The challenge is how to provide an educational delivery system that meets a multitude of diverse needs, yet still maintains standards necessary for entrance to the job market or college, while not losing students along the way. One stream of thought, advocated by cognitive psychologists, on how to create such a delivery system believes that there must be a "thinking curriculum" developed for all students. This curriculum must be founded upon a constructivist view that has as its goal to "stimulate and nourish students' own mental elaborations of knowledge and to help them grow in their capacity to monitor and guide their own learning and

thinking" (Resnick, 1989).

One of the more creative, practical, and intriguing approaches to this innovative view is offered in the reading/writing workshop model developed by Atwell (1987). The critical attributes of this model, which define both teacher and student roles, involve: daily conferencing among teacher and student and peers; teachers modeling reading and writing techniques; at least 30 minutes each day devoted to student reading or writing; opportunities for students to publish; routines that establish opportunities for group sharing; student ownership for learning; and a positive teacher attitude that each student will improve in his or her reading and writing.

### Statement of the Problem

This researcher observed [substantiated by Gardner (1983)] that the majority of secondary school graduates are not able to think critically and that this problem is a result of the linear method of instruction, curriculum, and assessment that is prevalent in the traditional educational process. This specific study defines true literacy as the ability to think critically and to apply one's knowledge base in the solving of actual problems. This study examines the problem of how to improve a student's critical thinking and of whether or not a whole language class, specifically the Atwell reading/writing workshop model, can be used to facilitate true literacy as students learn to think critically.

Gardner questions the assumption that intelligence is a single general capacity and that it can be measured by standardized verbal instruments commonly used today. He defines intelligence as the ability to solve problems or create products that are valued within one or more cultural settings. Intelligence involves a set of skills for finding, creating, or solving problems, thereby laying the groundwork for the acquisition of new knowledge.

School improvement must enable teachers to help students choose what and how to learn, choose the symbols with which to create meaningful activities to convey their understanding, and choose how to integrate knowledge and patterns of meaning to solve problems in their environments. All of these skills are important in the work environment.

The whole language classroom offers each student the opportunity to contribute to the learning experience from an individually-derived perspective (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1991; Rief, 1992). The student and the teacher reciprocate in developing meaning from the written word. Students are encouraged to talk, listen, tell stories, ask questions, and to refine ideas as they read and write. The whole language class is described by researchers like Atwell (1987), Calkins (1986), Goodman (1986), Graves (1983), Newkirk (1992), and Newman (1985) as a reading/writing workshop where the student brings to the learning experience his or her prior knowledge and experience. These researchers define the responsibility of the teacher as that of creating an environment where the student is empowered to draw upon his or her own reality as a basis for learning. Vygotsky (1978) termed this type

of experience "mediated" learning: "What the child can do in cooperation today he can do alone tomorrow."

Atwell's reading/writing workshop model was chosen for this research project because it emphasizes a whole language literacy experience that transfers to the workplace. It combines curriculum, instruction, and assessment in an integrated way to support students in their active construction of knowledge and meaning from reading, speaking, listening, and writing. In the traditional paradigm, instruction and curriculum overlap with assessment not really viewed as an integral part of the two. In the transitional phase between the two paradigms, curriculum, instruction and assessment intersect, but only peripherally. In the desired paradigm, that the Atwell model represents, curriculum, instruction, and assessment are infused (see fig. 1). Student skills acquired in this model that can transfer directly to the workplace include "the ability to process information; the ability to communicate effectively; the ability to work collaboratively in groups; and the ability to use self-regulated, creative, and critical thinking" (Marzano, 1992).

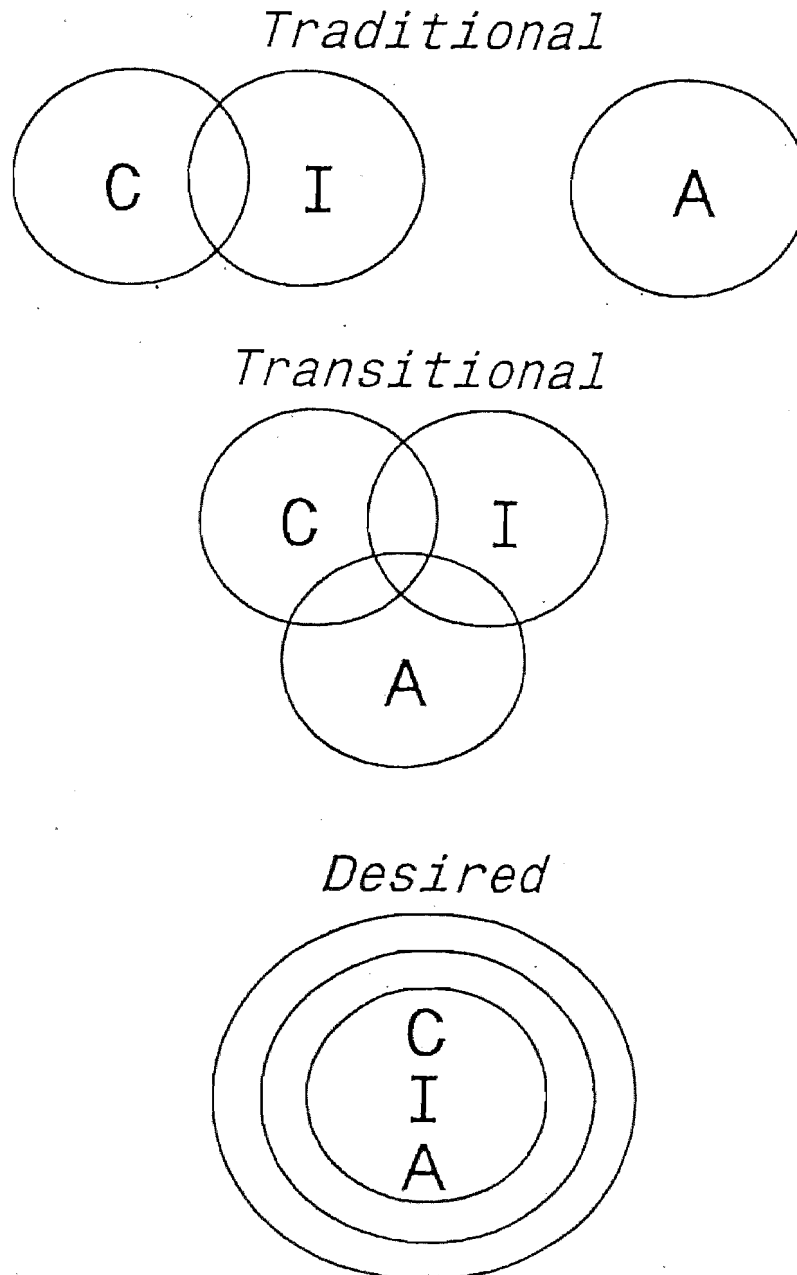
### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe and document the perceptions of twenty-two tenth-grade English students and their two language arts teachers, as they implemented Atwell's whole language reading/writing workshop approach toward the development of literacy. The descriptive documentation included a portfolio of each



student's work that demonstrated growth over time in skill, problem-solving, and attitude. The portfolios, as well as student and teacher interviews, provided answers to the following research questions:

Figure 1.



Curriculum, instruction,  
and assessment (National Education Association, 1993).

1. What were the goals of the teachers and the activities used to meet them?
2. Did the teachers view the learning process differently?
3. Did the students view the learning process differently?
4. What student products and activities helped change their literacy development?
5. Does whole language work in developing literacy?

### Use of the Case Study Method

This dissertation studied an application of the literacy process that Atwell (1987) discovered in her original study. Support for this process has been advanced from a variety of educational scholars and studies (Emig, 1971; Graves, 1975, 1990; Goswami & Odell, 1981; Calkins, 1986; and Rief, 1992). The focus is upon the microcosm of a classroom, as students interacted with their teachers and peers to acquire a self-owned literacy that allowed them to solve individual learning problems. The results provided a different view of the classroom and of the interaction of teacher and student.

We saw that instruction and assessment are inextricably bound and are derived from student interest and talent, not from deficits in existing student learning or predetermined curriculum materials. The study also showed that meaningful and effective education can be designed around the identity, experiences, and perceptions of the students.

## Theoretical Foundations

The need for a study of this kind is demonstrated by the confusion of educational approaches in the United States during the past century. The United States has continued to educate more of its population than any country in the world (Kirst, 1993). Originally, the elementary school was designed for mass education while the secondary school served the elite (Cusick, 1983). Between 1880 and 1930, the numbers of students attending secondary school increased by 60 percent, and the debate on how to educate everyone in a democratic society began (Resnick & Resnick, 1982). In 1893, the Committee of Ten reported that a core curriculum should be compulsory for every student in a high school (Sizer, 1964). This classical curriculum was determined primarily by college entrance requirements.

In 1918, The Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education, a report by the National Education Association (NEA) on the reorganization of secondary education, was issued. It advocated opening up the curriculum through practical arts electives to provide support for the broader needs of society and the individual. This report was heavily influenced by Dewey's view of education as the expression of democracy. The report emphasized the role of education in "...social integration, effective citizenship, and individual development through the study of health, communication, numeracy, home membership, vocation, citizenship, worthy use of leisure time, and ethical character" (Kliebard, 1992).

In 1926, the National Society for the Study of Education (N.S.S.E.) published

the work of a twelve-man committee, chaired by Harold Rugg, on curriculum-making. The aim was to write a consensual statement on the nature of curriculum design. A statement in their twenty-sixth yearbook entitled The Foundations of Curriculum-Making condemned evaluations that "over-emphasize memory of facts and principles and tend to neglect the more dynamic outcomes of instruction ..." (Rugg, 1927).

During the 1930s, an Eight Year Study was conducted by the Progressive Education Association. It examined the effects on student achievement of programs differing in content emphasis. Tyler, the director of the study, advocated development of a model of evaluation which focused on program standards to help teachers better assess educational outcomes (Kliebard, 1992). Tyler's (1949) belief that educational outcomes need to be defined in terms of identifiable behavior and in operational terms was supported by Skinner's (1953) behaviorist theory of learning. Thorndike's (1918) earlier development of ability testing further undergirded this scientific view of education. Objective tests began to define both curriculum and instruction.

The exploration of outer space and the technological excitement resulting from the successful launching of Sputnik in 1959 promoted another response to educational achievement in the United States. Led enthusiastically by scientists, foundations, the College Board, the National Academy of Sciences and Colleges, and the United States Congress, emphasis was placed on learning the sciences. As a result, Conant issued a study of the American high schools that recommended more stringent standards both for curriculum and for teacher training (Sizer, 1964; Conant, 1959). High stakes

group testing became the tool by which to measure the increased standards for educational success.

One constant that has continued since the 1880s is the use of tests that were developed with no connection to either the curriculum or to student performance in the classroom. They were designed to demonstrate general knowledge, not to assess what was actually being taught to students in individual classrooms. Students who could not obtain high scores on standardized tests, that were unrelated to what or how they were taught, were considered as less intelligent. Students, as well as schools, were given differential treatment for high scores on standardized tests. The belief in the ability of all students to learn, if properly taught, was affected by the payment for results inherent in high stakes testing (Resnick & Resnick, 1982). The rewards of special classes, funding, scholarships, et cetera were given to students and schools in accordance with their scores. Students and schools that were not as successful were considered deficient and were not rewarded.

#### Hypotheses and Assumptions

The use of a performance-based/whole language curriculum in a tenth-grade English classroom is based on the following assumptions, the first three of which are implicit in the Atwell model and the fourth which is imperative to guide the study:

Assumption One. Secondary education in the United States must undergo significant changes in curriculum and in methods of instruction if the nation is to meet the demands of the 21st century.

Today, with the emphasis in providing programs for the "at risk" student, virtually all American youth at some point are enrolled in high school, but attrition remains high. "In 1986, an average of 3,789 students were dropping out per day" (U.S. Department of Education, 1987). Many students who do graduate do not have the basic skills necessary for entry-level requirements on the job. Teachers try to set high standards, but they have no way of inducing the students to meet those standards other than through the power of each instructor's personality. Demanding academic requirements often are undermined by the lack of curriculum-based student incentives other than grades (Bishop, 1989). Students see no relationship between what they are required to study and the real world. They view assessment as a separate event, not related to the process of thinking that is continuous and authentic (Wiggins, 1995).

In America's Choice: high skills or low wages! (1990), a report on the condition of education prepared by the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, William Brock addressed the fallacy in teachers' and administrators' excuse that there is no longer a primarily homogeneous population that understands the value of working hard in school. "This excuse," says Brock, "indicates that as a nation we believe that black, Hispanic, and immigrant children can't be educated to the same standard as a largely white population." He implies that to effectively deal with this excuse, schools must have expectations that all students can learn. Students must treat learning as a matter of the highest priority. Not only should there be 100 percent graduation from high school, students' achievement levels should compare favorably with those of their peers in other developed nations. To be able to

accomplish this vision, the nature and content of public education must be fundamentally altered.

Assumption Two. Secondary students must be intrinsically involved in the learning process to achieve.

To be motivated, students must feel that education is not something that is done to them, but that they are intrinsically involved in the educational process. Instruction must be more personalized and oriented to actual achievement not just to units of time that a student sits in a classroom. The student must feel in control of his or her own learning if higher levels of achievement are to occur (Paris, 1983). According to Bishop (1989), for American students to become motivated, they must have intrinsic incentives for learning. He believes that students need continuous assessment of effort and learning in high schools.

Most students perceive the chance of receiving recognition for academic achievements as so small that they give up. Students who are able to score well on multiple choice tests that test factual recall receive recognition for achievement, while students who do not perform as well on these types of assessment receive poor grades.

Students have become so used to the multiple choice test that when given tasks requiring reflection and problem-solving, either in the educational or work environment, they flounder. Multiple-choice tests usually employ the lowest level of cognition -- drill and memory (Wiggins, 1989). Bishop (1989), among others,

advocates the use of alternative means of assessment to challenge students to think intellectually.

Assumption Three. Secondary students must have the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills through a thoughtfully applied application that provides a viable and useful method for motivating cognitive achievement, engenders higher self-esteem, and builds confidence.

It is becoming increasingly evident that there is a need for significant change in the manner in which we assess students. "At least three factors have contributed to the demands for assessment reform: the changing nature of educational goals; the relationship between assessment and teaching and learning; and the limitations of the current methods of recording performance and reporting credit" (Marzano, Pickering, & McTighe, 1993). It has become imperative that a curriculum be created that meets a multitude of diverse needs while still maintaining standards necessary for the development of independent, self-motivated, critical thinkers who are able to take the responsibility for life-long learning (Hodgkinson, 1993; Brown & Campione, 1990).

Resnick and Klopfer (1989), Wiggins (1989) and Tierney, Carter, & Desai (1991), among others, advocate the use of performance assessment to challenge students to achieve intellectually. Performance assessments are contextualized and complex and based on tasks that persons face in the real world (Wiggins, 1991).

A number of schools and districts are developing performance assessments to engage the student in self-evaluation, which must occur if the student is to be a



partner in the educational process (Winograd, Paris, & Bridge, 1991).

Performance-based assessments give students access to their own learning because both the process and product offer students the opportunity to actively participate in their own evaluation and growth (Valencia, 1990). These assessments may include writing tests, portfolios, or culminating exhibitions. Students have the opportunity to demonstrate both knowledge and skill development within a context that provides for meaningful performances (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985).

Performance assessment is developmental. It is an assessment that is an on-going process over time. Unlike assessments that just focus on a singular outcome, it provides each student with equal access for achievement (Valencia, 1990).

Performance assessment promotes higher-order thinking skills through the active self-reflection of what has been learned and what needs to be learned so that all students are challenged through being in control of their own learning (Wiggins, 1989).

Performance-based assessment permits instruction and assessment to be woven together in a way that is purposeful (Costa, 1989). There is a collaborative effort between the student and teacher to choose the content, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and the evidence of student self-reflection.

Performance-based assessment is an effective educational tool for encouraging students to take charge of their own learning. When students can assume ownership of their own work, they learn to value their work and, by extension, to value themselves (Paulson, Paulson, and Meyer, 1990).

The students are offered the chance to take academic risks with a performance

assessment because grades are not benchmarks determined by a bell-shaped curve. They can develop creative ways to solve problems and learn to make judgments about their work. In a performance assessment, the student is a participant rather than the object of evaluation. The student develops the skills to be an independent, self-directed learner (Wiggins, 1993).

A performance assessment provides the learner with multiple opportunities to actively use learning strategies that integrate knowledge and skills and solve real problems. The learner uses personally useful information to gain control over learning and to reflect upon what it means to be literate, educated, or successful. A curriculum that incorporates performance assessment is intrinsically motivational. It allows for the functional development of skills through the use of systems thinking, personal interactions, information, resources, and technology that are identified as necessary skills for job success (Carnevale, Gainer, & Meltzer, 1990). A performance assessment requires the use of intellectual skills. It also develops maturity, self-esteem, cooperation, sociability, and reliability. Each student has an equal opportunity to succeed (Wiggins, 1989).

Assumption Four. Data to substantiate the effectiveness of a whole language model that intertwines curriculum, instruction and performance-based assessment can be collected and analyzed through qualitative investigation in a naturalistic paradigm.

The researcher is a partner in telling the story that emerges from the event that is witnessed. "The context is construed as giving meaning and existence to the

inquired into; the methodology involves a dialectic of iteration, analysis, critique, reiteration, reanalysis, and so on, thus leading to the emergence of a joint understanding of the case" (Guba, 1987).

The naturalistic paradigm recognizes that all of the variables in a system generate meaning. It does not examine data in isolation and represent it as truth. It is a process that requires a holistic view, that creates a gestalt as field data are coded and clustered and defined. It looks for emerging themes. The data in this study were compared and contrasted to look for similar categories that emerged as strands. As the various categories merge to tell a story, the lens for the evaluator changes from a wide angled macrocosm to the narrow focus of the students and teachers in the microcosm of the classroom. Themes represented by the collective data in this story emerge as theory.

### Case Summary

Content classes in high schools must teach more than isolated facts that are assessed in a summative manner. If students are going to develop thinking skills that are transferable to other domains as learning strategies, assessment procedures in the class must be both formative and holistic (Brown, 1978). Learning activities must involve the student and teacher as partners, with students assuming ownership for their learning (Palinscar & Brown, 1989).

According to Resnick's 1991 report to the SCANS Commission, the majority

of performance-based assessments are in the area of writing, music, art, physical education, and vocational education. Some states have looked at a variety of content areas for performance assessment. National commissions in subjects such as science, math, English, and history have explored intertwining teaching, learning and assessment in a seamless manner within curricular strands to teach participation skills, critical thinking skills and basic skills. To support this new curricular framework, teachers are encouraged to use a full range of technology and oral, written, and performance assessments.

In a specific example of this new approach, the National Council of Teachers of English, the International Reading Association and other precollegiate and higher education English groups formed a joint task force on assessment in 1991 to examine the language arts curriculum (Standard for the Assessment of Reading Material, 1994). They determined that the curriculum had to be reorganized to reflect the view of learners as actively involved in the learning environment. The only way that writing, reading, and thinking skills would transfer would be if learning were integrally part of the learner's experience. To achieve this, content must have more depth; needless review needs to be eliminated; students need to be taught to be reflective learners; connections should be made across curriculums; and enriched environments should be created for all learners.

Resnick (1991) suggested content areas that could provide opportunities for students to achieve both functional and enabling skills through performance assessment. Language arts is one area where students could think critically in the use

of integrated knowledge to solve problems. She suggests that the assessment process is an integral teaching tool in the development of higher order thinking skills and in enabling the product to become embedded in the process.

This dissertation study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the Atwell model through the observation of a specific classroom environment in which two teachers planned curriculum and instruction by using a whole language approach to teach students to read, to write, and to problem solve. The researcher observed twenty-two students as they engaged in a performance-based assessment that was an integral part of a tenth grade high school English class based on the Atwell reading/writing workshop model of instruction. Particular attention was given to patterns of teacher and student behavior that led to successful student performances in the demonstration of literacy.

### Definition of Key Terms

The following terms are used in this study:

Case Study	-	an indepth examination of a specific literacy model as used in a secondary language arts classroom.
Knowledge	-	the acquisition of information that is retained to enable persons to communicate effectively; to work collaboratively in groups; and to use self-regulated, creative, and critical thinking.
Literacy	-	the ability to read, to write, and to think in order to solve problems.
Performance-Based Assessment	-	<p>This is the direct demonstration of a targeted skill. It has been defined by Wiggins as "authentic assessment" and may include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Culminating exhibitions - Students demonstrate that they have learned the content and skills of a course.</li> <li>2. Hands-on experiences - Students are asked to use manipulatives to demonstrate a skill.</li> </ol>

3. Open-ended experiences - Students are asked to solve problems that have more than one correct answer and are asked to explain their answers.
4. Portfolios - Students choose a collection of work that is developmental and each student reflects upon his/her work.
5. Writing tests - Students are asked to write on a topic and their essays or stories are rated by a team of readers.

Symbolic Interactionism -	a theory that seeks to explain human behavior in terms of meanings (Blumer, 1969).
Reader Response Theory -	a theory that describes reading and writing and speaking as generative processes for developing meaning. The principles involve teachers facilitating learner motivation, attention to important information, and generation of associations and relationships.
Thinking -	". . . observing, inferring, relating, and integrating" (Loacker, 1986).
Whole Language -	a positive philosophy that one learns to read and write by reading and writing while using the language from one's environment and experience. The student is immersed in authentic language. The program is student-centered, treating the student as capable and developing. Student choice is fundamental. Evaluation is on-going with self-assessment emphasized.

### Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that it is atypical in its inquiry into how the application of a performance-based assessment, that is an integral part of a whole language model in a high school language arts classroom, typifies the active learning needed by good workers. The majority of whole language classes are in elementary with some in middle school. It is also unusual to link the Atwell reading/writing model with the critical thinking skills needed by workers on the job. This study described an environment in which learner and teacher became partners in reflective learning, and where the vehicle for the development of critical skills was the process. It showed how teachers can facilitate self-directed learning that enables the student to

continuously demonstrate the development of literacy. It is the development of self-directed learning that allows the student to be successful in the job market.

### Overview of the Remaining Chapters

Chapter 2 contains a literature review that is divided into three sections: conceptual foundations, current theories and methods, and the Atwell reading/writing curricular model. Chapter 3 explains the design, methodology, and analysis procedures utilized in this study. A description of all of the data collected in this bounded system constitutes Chapter 4. Chapter 5 summarizes the findings and their implications, and suggests recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them to become what they are capable of being.

Goethe

The literature review is divided into three major sections. The first consists of the conceptual foundations that form the basis for this study. The second section explores current theories and methods that have developed from these foundations. The last section examines the Atwell reading/writing curricular model on which this study is based.

The Whole Language movement has grown out of the Pragmatic and Cognitive movements of the twentieth century. These reform movements and theories are interconnected by their educational focus on learning as a process of solving problems intelligently in a social environment. They view the intellectual relationship that the student has with the world as continuous and interactive. Perception plays a key role in thinking. An act or event unfolds in the context of a real learning environment. Language is used to negotiate meaning within a community of learners. Teachers facilitate reflective thinking through students speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The ideas of psychologists, like Dewey (1916), Piaget & Inhelder (1969), Vygotsky (1978), Bruner, Oliver, Greenfield, et al. (1966), Gardner (1983), Resnick (1986), Shulman (1986), Sternberg & Lubart (1991), and Snow (1989) lead one into the other



and are made explicit in the whole language theory in general and in the Atwell reading/writing curricular model specifically. From the foundations, one can see that active learning, performance-based assessment, metacognitive strategies and constructivist theories are all reflected in the whole language perspective. These theories merge in the whole language reading/writing classroom in which I observed. In this chapter, I will examine these ideas specifically and how they are applied in the classroom.

### Conceptual Foundations

Educational instruction has shifted from teaching disconnected, rote learning to teaching students how to think, learn and solve problems. The problem of how to teach students to think was the subject of writings by Whitehead (1929), and Simon (1980), both of whom argued that students were memorizing isolated facts and were not learning how to organize knowledge so that it could be acted upon to solve problems.

Dewey (1916) addressed the contextual view of education in the development of pragmatism. In this theory, knowledge is viewed as constantly changing. The individual interacts with an ever changing environment to live, learn and develop. The scientific method is used to solve personal, social and intellectual problems that apply both in and out of the classroom. The teacher facilitates the development of a community of individual learners who support each other in solving common

problems. To Dewey, the classroom was a laboratory.

The constructivist view of learning as action oriented was built upon the work of cognitive psychologists like Bruner, et al. (1966), Piaget & Inhelder (1969), and Vygotsky (1978), who, like Dewey (1916), created contextual theories of learning that addressed questions about successful problem solving. In each of their theories of cognition, language plays a central part in intellectual development. Thought and language-making remain distinct entities in each of the theories, with verbal ability emerging through the deep structures of thought (Foster, 1983).

Piaget & Inhelder (1969) believed that cognitive growth in children occurs through continuous interaction of the child with the environment. He described the development of intelligence as a series of four stages. Piaget believed that human learning begins before language develops during the first stage. This phase, where the ability to communicate with symbols is not linguistic, is called a "sensory-motor" stage. During the "preoperational thought" stage, occurring from approximately two to seven years, the child begins to imitate and symbolically play. During the third stage, "concrete operations," which occurs from seven to eleven years, the child finally masters number signs, processes and relationships. The final stage of development, "formal operations," which occurs from eleven to fifteen years, finds the child using the scientific method of inquiry to master mathematical, linguistic, and mechanical processes.

Language develops, according to Vygotsky (1978), because of social interdependence and a need to make sense of the world. He elaborated upon Piaget's

description of language development as one that begins with "egocentric speech" at six months. He described the development of "practical intelligence" or the imitative use of tools as beginning to develop independently at the same time. As the child's cognition "decenters," inner speech begins to develop. At approximately four or five years, the child begins to use speech and tools to solve problems. According to Vygotsky (1978), "this [time period] is the most significant course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence...." Because the child exists in a social interdependence with others, in order to communicate, a system of external speech begins. The development of inner speech facilitates the development of language because, as Bruner, et al.(1966) notes, it organizes human experience so that the child can make sense of the world and his place in it.

Language is not the sole mode of thinking. Piaget & Inhelder (1969) defined mathematical logic as another mode of intelligence. Gardner (1983) defines intelligence as a broad range of human abilities that can be clustered into seven independent capacities:

1. Linguistic intelligence: rooted in the visual and auditory realms.
2. Musical intelligence: rooted in the auditory realm.
3. Logical-mathematic intelligence: rooted in the sensory-motor realm.
4. Spatial intelligence: not rooted in any particular modality.
5. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence: rooted in the kinesthetic realm.
6. Personal intelligence: intrapersonal, sense of self and access to one's own feelings.
7. Personal intelligence: interpersonal or social intelligence; ability to make distinctions among other individuals.

Many cognitive psychologists believe that the human mind and thinking can be

studied scientifically in collaboration with computer scientists, linguists, and philosophers (Resnick, 1986).

One of the most important developments in cognitive science has been the gradual construction of new ways of linking knowledge and performance. Process theories of cognitive functioning provide precise statements of how the knowledge that people possess permits them to perform in certain ways on certain kinds of tasks. The interest in processes of thought has led to the refinement of methods that trace sequential steps in thinking" (Resnick, 1986).

Glaser (1976) identified three patterns that must be considered for the linkage of knowledge and performance: (a) successful problem-solving behaviors; (b) the student's view of himself or herself as a learner before the process; and (c) the teacher's strategic planning for facilitating the transference of knowledge. Shulman emphasized the importance of teachers being aware of contextual aspects of learning.

Studies of the cognitive psychology of instruction concentrate on how students use their knowledge and conceptions to apprehend what they are taught .... [C]ognitive psychologists assume that all learners approach instruction actively. They already possess extensive bodies of knowledge organized in particular ways. When presented with new knowledge by texts or teachers, they actively process the information in that instruction through the filters or lenses of their prior understanding. The essential task for teachers, therefore, is to appraise, infer, or anticipate these prior cognitive structures that students bring to the learning situation. Teachers must organize the content of their instruction in terms of those preconceptions, actively working to reveal and transform them when they would interfere with adequate comprehension of the new material to be taught. The language of this research program includes such key terms as *schema*, *script*, *frame*, *metacognitive strategy*, and other words to describe those mental tools or structures employed by learners to make sense of what they are being taught (Shulman, 1986).

Cognitive psychologists like Resnick (1981) and Gardner (1983) support Shulman and Glaser's views. They have determined that learning occurs, not because

an instructor puts knowledge into a student's head, but because the student has been placed in an active role of providing a meaningful structure to the knowledge to be learned.

In studying students' thought processes, Wittrock (1986) found that teachers have a strong effect on student thought processes and that how the student thinks affects his or her learning and achievement. If students have negative thoughts about themselves, both their learning and their level of achievement decreases. Wittrock (1986) also used students' thought processes to develop a model of generative learning. This model had as its basis the learner actively organizing knowledge to enable new information to be stored as long term memory.

Brown (1978) found that as students learned new knowledge, they could also be taught metacognitive techniques that not only increased their knowledge base in a specific subject matter but also generalized understanding across different domains.

Intelligence is described by Sternberg and Lubart (1991) as "the ability to define and redefine problems and the ability to think insightfully." According to Sternberg, great thinkers like Albert Einstein, because of their divergent thinking abilities, are able to take new knowledge and apply it to old problems in creative ways.

Only rarely do schools allow students to define their own problems and to solve their problems in creative ways (Sternberg & Lubart, 1991). The teacher, textbook, and the test not only pose the problems for students to solve, they also provide the correct answer. Students need the flexibility to explore problems in each

subject area and to ask questions that may have no answers. There must be less memorizing of current knowledge and more posing of problems that search for new information.

When students are taught to think insightfully, it must be in conjunction with a subject domain. Sternberg and Lubart (1991) suggests that problem solving skills will only transfer between domains when a student has experience with thinking insightfully about real problems. Teaching a student metacognitive skills in isolation has no relevance to his or her environment. Schools that allow students to experience the ambiguity of problem solving will teach "knowledge for use, rather than for exams ...."

Snow (1989) researched the psychological structures and processes involved in learning and tied cognitive theories of learning to educational methodology. According to Snow, new conceptions of learning and development required a new construct of assessment. He proposed a structure within which to view cognitive theories of learning development and constructs that lead from knowledge and skill acquisition and strategy development to the assessment of that developmental process. Snow used some of Glaser's (1976) terminology in the development of this "network of psychological constructs for research on assessment in learning from instruction" (see fig. 2):

The constructs are in three columns according to the constituent of instructional theory that each appears to reference.... The analysis of initial states of learners provides aptitude constructs, and the analysis of

desired end states provides achievement constructs, and the analysis of the transitions between these states provides learning-development constructs.... In the rows of (Fig. 2), five categories of constructs are identified: conceptual structures of declarative knowledge; procedural skills involved in learning, thinking, and reasoning; learning strategies, styles, and tactics; self-regulatory functions; and motivational orientations (Snow, 1989, p. 9).

Figure 2.

	Aptitude Constructs	Learning Development Constructs	Achievement Constructs
	Initial States	Transitions	Desired States
Conceptual Structures	Naive Theories and Misconceptions	Recapitulation and Progression Accretion Restructuring	Deep Understanding
Procedural Skills	Skill components	Coordination and Transfer	Efficient Intuitive Use
Learning Strategies	Selective Attention	Incrementation and Internalization	Multiple Flexible Strategies
Self-Regulatory Functions	Action Oriented	Intention Protection Expectation Engagement Personalization	Adaptive Action Control
Motivational Orientations	Mastery Orientation	Effort Investment	Achievement Motivation

A network of psychological constructs for research on assessment in learning from instruction (Snow, 1989).

### Current Theory and Methods

A common theme that emerges as one reads the literature on the restructuring of education in the United States is that the "transmission" education of the 1920s, where teachers imparted knowledge to students, must change to the paradigm of "transaction" where the student actively engages in learning what is known and what is unknown. For this shift from knowledge transmission to critical thinking to occur, each teacher must view his or her task as that of a facilitator who has the goal of empowering each student to become an independent thinker and problem solver (Hillard, 1991).

### Active Learning

The framework of active learning involves both student and teacher becoming more collaborative and nurturing independent learning as curriculum and assessment become more intertwined. A curriculum that supports active learning is committed to the process of inquiry. Within such an active learning framework, assessment becomes exploration. Rather than emphasizing pieces of knowledge, this type of curriculum and assessment emphasizes the ability to recognize problems and to generate multiple and diverse perspectives in trying to solve them. This inquiry perspective is based on the belief that knowledge and language will change over time, but what will remain constant is the need for lifelong learners who can solve new problems, generate new knowledge, and invent new methods of communication and become more flexible in language practices (International Reading Association and



National Council of Teachers of English, 1994). This "thinking curriculum", values diversity of informational sources and multiple solutions to problems. Classrooms become environments where both the teacher and the student assume responsibility for learning and assessment.

### Performance-Based Assessment

In a lecture delivered to the SCANS Commission on December 6, 1991, Resnick, reported on the progress of her research team's efforts to create a national examination system that would enable all students to succeed in obtaining work-ready problem-solving skills. The New Standards Project would extend the current work being done by states and districts on performance testing. It would incorporate the best work of all of the partner states in the creation of the new examination. Teachers would be at the heart of the process, defining standards through examples of their students' work. This national examination "would consist of three main components, sometimes referred to as the 3 P's -- timed Performance examinations, student Projects (group and individual), and Portfolios of student work" (Resnick, 1991).

"During performance examinations, students would be asked to solve challenging problems, putting to use knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom. These exams might consist of substantial essays, laboratory demonstrations, or the use of multiple mathematical methods to solve a complex technical problem. Portfolios would consist of student's best work ... " (Resnick, 1991). Projects would be both

individual and group and might involve parents as well as the teacher. Resnick explained that if performance assessments, projects and portfolios were begun in elementary school and extended through high school, the examination process would be continuous and developmental with numerous assessments built into the curriculum and with critical thinking embedded in the continuous process of actively applying knowledge to solve problems. Culminating exams would occur at the 4th, 8th and 12th grades to provide benchmarks for student achievement in critical areas of the curriculum. "The proposed system would give us, for the first time, a set of rich and varied ways to measure and encourage learning" (Resnick, 1991).

A significant problem that confronted Resnick and her team was the inability of students to generalize. At Snow Mass, Colorado, teachers began in August, 1991, to develop performance assessments, tasks, and standards, in cooperation with individuals from the community workplace. The assessments were designed to reflect actual problems that the students would encounter on the job. The students were trained in specific job tasks and were evaluated on the standards that were required to be able to adequately complete the assigned task. The researchers discovered that there was no task generalization in the performance assessment. The original tasks that the students were taught did not allow for the restructuring of knowledge that the student already possessed; therefore, the student did not develop a deep understanding of the thinking process involved or an intuitive use of the skill or strategy required for successful performances.

Psychometric experts said that the test components had to be embedded in the

instruction to have generalization, that it was the only way to get a reliable performance in a complex assessment. Wiggins (1995) describes this as "coherence -- there has to be a clear and rational relation of parts to whole and of parts to each other; there should be an apparent unity." The learner must be able to gain control over "performance for understanding" (Gardner & Boix-Mansilla, 1994). Dewey (1916) called this "the logic of inquiry and learning" -- the student should never be puzzled by what comes next. Problems should arise naturally as the student attempts to master "worthwhile tasks." Students should be rewarded for successive approximations in the development of competence in performance (Wiggins, 1995). Assessment must be a process that supports the development of critical thinking as students organize their knowledge to solve problems.

Research (Bransford & Vye, 1989) indicates that knowledge plus strategy is important. Memorizing isolated bits of knowledge in isolation is not adequate, just as learning a strategy without a knowledge base is inadequate. Expert learners recognize patterns of information that are familiar. They are better able to monitor their own thinking and problem solving and to assess performance and to predict outcomes. Performance-based assessment provides practice in developing patterns of meaningful knowledge. In new situations, skills of learning and general attitudes about ourselves as problem solvers become important. This cannot occur during a single performance that is not longitudinal.

### Metacognitive Strategies

A number of studies have researched the teaching of metacognition as a strategy to facilitate task generalization. Belmont, Butterfield, and Ferretti (1982) instructed individuals in rehearsal strategies that had little transference to tasks outside the experiment. Brown (1978) looked at whether or not students who were trained to assess when to use certain test taking strategies could actually apply these skills successfully. Some progress was noted. Most metacognitive training such as Ericsson, Chase, and Faloon's (1980) experiment with a college student who was asked to memorize increasingly longer lists of numbers, has focused on memory. The student memorized the numbers as meaningful chunks of information. As long as the student could relate the numbers to information that he already possessed, he could be successful. Otherwise, the student was unable to retain the numbers either as short or long term knowledge.

Palinscar and Brown (1989) conducted a study of the effects of reciprocal teaching on middle school children that illustrated how students could be taught a metacognitive skill using a performance-based assessment. Instruction was intertwined with the assessment as students read material, organized it in their own words and then thought about questions that the material posed. Children who had difficulty in reading comprehension were divided into a control group and a group in which an adult taught children reciprocally by having the children read a passage, retell it, and pose questions about what they read. The children would take turns analyzing each other's questions and answers and would pose new ones. The training continued daily for four weeks and then ceased for eight weeks. The children were assessed before

the training, during training, and after the eight week interim. It was found that children who had received metacognitive training were able to comprehend material at a higher level in their reading class, and this ability transferred to other domains (like science and social studies). The control group members did not have the same demonstrated increase in their reading comprehension skills either in the reading class or in other content areas.

In analyzing this study, Resnick (1986) concluded that there are three possible reasons for the success of performance-based assessment: (a) Metacognition could be a component in the process of all learning; (b) The teaching of metacognitive skills could release capacities that already exist in some learners; (c) Reciprocal teaching, where the student reads information, retells it, develops questions about the information, and analyzes answers with peers and the teacher, could be a special form of social interaction that may be necessary for the acquisition of a cognitive skill.

Cole (1988) and Resnick (1991) continued to study how the environment could be manipulated to provide opportunities for children to learn reasoning and other complex thinking skills. They suggested that

other processes that appear repeatedly in the analyses of complex task performance play a kind of ... self-regulatory role in thinking. People use these processes to keep track of their own understanding, to initiate review or rehearsal activities when needed, and to deliberately organize their attention and other resources in order to learn something. These activities have been shown to be characteristic of effective learners, good readers and writers, and strong problem solvers.... These skills are sometimes called metacognitive skills (Brown, 1978) because they operate on an individual's own cognitive processes. They have been suggested frequently as processes that could be taught and that would enhance learning and thinking in a wide range of specific situations.

### Constructivist Theories

It becomes the job of teachers to provide opportunities for students to become experts. The curriculum must have opportunities for repeated performance and rehearsal attempts. Wiggins (1995) describes the "coherent" curriculum as one that is "experienced." Piaget and Inhelder (1969) described the learning process as one that leads to "invention rather than the discovery of what someone else knows." The constructivist philosophy supports teachers in the development of behaviors that

encourage and accept student autonomy and initiative; ... use raw data and primary sources along with manipulative, interactive, and physical materials; use cognitive terminology such as classify, analyze, predict, and create ... when framing tasks; allow student responses to drive lessons, shift instructional strategies, and alter content; inquire about student understanding of concepts before sharing their own understandings of those concepts; encourage students to engage in dialogue, both with the teacher and with one another; encourage student inquiry by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and encouraging students to ask questions of each other; seek elaboration of students' initial responses; engage students in experiences that might engender contradictions to their initial hypotheses and then encourage discussion; allow wait time after posing questions; provide time for students to construct relationships and create metaphors; nurture students' natural curiosity through frequent use of the learning cycle model (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

Oldfather (1993), who conducts research on students' motivation for literacy and on constructivism in teaching and learning, found that with emphasis on the student, learning becomes an active process happening within and influenced by the student. Learning outcomes do not depend on what the teacher presents. Outcomes are an interactive result of what information is encountered and how the student processes it. The research assumes a highly active role for students who, because of the "deep responsiveness of the classroom culture to students' expression: written,

oral, and artistic," are able to create ... "a 'rich broth of meaning' that permeate[s] the curriculum."

The constructivist presents a picture of learning as active, constructive, cumulative, and goal oriented. The more traditional view of a teacher as the articulator of a large number of relevant facts and ideas changes in a constructivist perspective. Knowledge is not simply transferred by means of words without first agreeing on the meaning of those words and establishing an experiential base. Explaining a problem does not lead to an understanding unless the learning has an internal scheme that maps what the student has heard (Snow, 1989; Shulman, 1986). Learning becomes the product of self organization and reorganization. Students do not enter the school with a blank slate (a behaviorist concept). Their minds are active and capable of weighing alternatives and reducing ambiguity.

### Whole Language Theories

The whole language classroom exemplifies the constructivist philosophy by providing the novice with numerous opportunities to become an expert through the use of inductive thinking. The method of teaching in a whole language classroom is introspective; whole meaningful experiences are perceived. Parts are related to a whole. Students confronted with a problem seek new information or rearrange old information to gain insight into its solution (Goodman, 1986). It is this insight that becomes the motivating factor for the student to continue in the process of becoming

proficient.

Bruner, et al. (1966), in his writings on cognitive theories, states that students seek a solution to a problem intrinsically. He suggests that students have a curiosity and an inborn tendency and self-motivation to think inductively. He disagrees that a teacher must reward with praise or profit for having satisfied that curiosity. He states that external reinforcements are unnecessary in assisting a student's need for motivation. "External reinforcement may indeed get a particular act going and may even lead to its repetition; but it does not nourish reliably,[sic] the long course of learning by which man builds in his own way a serviceable model of what the world is and what it can be."

Researchers like Calkins (1986), Atwell (1987), Graves (1990), and Rief (1992) have explored constructivist theories of learning in the whole language classroom in which teachers can motivate student literacy through empowerment. The teacher supports students' taking personal ownership for their literacy learning by giving them a say about what happens in the classroom. Students choose books, projects, and writing topics that are personally interesting and relevant. All assessments are authentically based on the students' choice of topics or literature.

According to Graves (1990), for evaluation to be authentic in language arts, it must take place in the classroom within the context of a balanced literacy program. In a balanced literacy program, there are three main components. All three components interact and work together: (a) a rich literacy experience, (b) assessment and evaluation, and (c) personal connections and social interaction. According to Hiebert



and Fisher (1990), "students in whole-language classes spent more time on literacy tasks, especially writing tasks and ... their literacy tasks [are] larger and more cognitively complex when compared to tasks in the skills-oriented classes." As the constructivist theory of reading and writing changed the language arts classroom in the past five years, a growing interest in alternative assessment also began. Teachers needed "an assessment system that honor[ed] the alignment of instruction and assessment ... that communicated to those inside and outside the classroom, the real literacy achievements of ... students. Now more than any time in the past, literacy assessment is beginning to look like authentic reading and writing" (Valencia, 1990).

"Literacy reflects both processes of learning and products of knowledge, so assessment must provide measures of both" (Winograd, Paris and Bridge, 1991).

"Literacy research in the past two decades has changed the way we view reading and writing.... [R]eading comprehension is now conceptualized as an interactive process in which readers use their prior knowledge along with text information to construct meaning (Anderson, et al., 1985). "[W]e have come to [recognize] ... that literacy is functional; it capitalizes on the development of speaking and listening skills and it is best learned in authentic settings with the help of adults. Traditional assessments remove literacy from real purposes and uses.... Traditional assessments prohibit the use of learning strategies.... Traditional approaches to assessment may redefine the goals of education in ways that are counterproductive to student motivation" (Winograd, et al., 1991). If literacy is to improve, assessments must also be improved. Authentic assessments must be created that engage learners in: "worthy

problems; real-life 'tests' of adult life; multi-stage tasks; tasks that require the student to produce a quality product or performance; transparent... criteria and standards...; [i]nteractions between assessor and assessee; ... response-contingent challenges ...; [and] patterns of response in diverse settings" (Wiggins, 1993).

### The Atwell Reading/Writing Model

Atwell (1987) took a diverse group of students enrolled in a language arts class in Boothbay Harbor, Maine, and was able to combine the constructivist theory of learning with whole language instruction to create an environment that supported the attainment of literacy. The principles of learning revealed in her study were supported by Vygotsky's (1978) dialectical philosophy of the development of the human mind and culture. This constructivist theory defines knowledge as internal and subjective, and the learning enterprise as one that helps students develop new meanings in response to new experiences rather than to learn the meanings others have created during instruction. Looking at learning from this perspective, Atwell (1987) found a different environment emerging, one in which instruction was seen through the eyes of the students, not through preferred methods, mandated curricula, scope and sequence, or standardized tests. Atwell found that the teacher and student shared responsibility for each performance. Learning, in this context, became a continuous practice of applying knowledge, asking questions and synthesizing information.

Atwell (1987), using the research methods of Emig (1971), Graves (1975),

Goswami and Odell (1981) became a research-teacher in the cognitive processes of her students as they designed a curriculum that met each student's developmental need. Students were taught to build cognitive relationships and to connect concepts. Atwell was an active participant in the learner-teacher relationship. She helped students see the facts and ideas as part of a larger concept. She introduced ambiguity to provide exercises by which students could devise strategies for solving problems. As a whole language researcher, she modeled a method of give and take. Atwell relinquished power and became a facilitator for the building of relationships and experiences that were organized into meaningful patterns.

All the aspects of the reading-writing workshop model design researched by Atwell (1987) were organized into meaningful activities which related to the overall concept or experience. Mini-lectures about skills and strategies, derived from authentic student reading or writing problems, allowed for meaningful student-teacher interactions in conferences to clarify or confirm an hypothesis. She demonstrated how to guide student activities, model appropriate behavior, provide examples and turn student talk into useful communication. Student perceptions were listened to and valued. Constructive listening encouraged the talker to reflect on the meaning of events and ideas in his or her reading and writing. Listening became a tool for empowerment.

The whole language model that was utilized by Atwell (1987) uses more heterogeneous and small group instruction which gives students more choices. The content of lessons emerge during group interactions. Student questions and ideas are

used to guide lessons. The teacher encourages student initiation of ideas and of collaboration. Learning is continuous, thoughtful, and active. Students are given reasons for engaging in particular lessons which are based on their interests and experiences. Everything in this model, as in any whole language class, work together to support activities that produce fluent readers and writers (Graves, 1990).

### Discussion of the Literature Review

If student learning is to transfer to the work environment, students must achieve and understand, and we must be able to assess whether students are learning how to learn. As Glaser (1988) said, "to place tests in the service of learning in a marriage of cognitive and psychometric theory, we must always consider assessment ... as measures of skills and dispositions that are essential to further learning....

Modern learning theory is taking on the characteristics of a developmental psychology of performance changes ...." Piaget and Inhelder (1969) pointed out that to understand is to invent. Both Dewey (1938) and Bruner, et al. (1966) described the curriculum as a "spiral" that should be organized in such a way that performance in one problem leads to the next. Dewey (1916) believed that knowledge which was isolated from meaningful context was useless. The teacher's job was to construct genuine educational experiences out of problems. Bruner, et al. (1966) believed that the "young learner should be given the chance to solve problems, to conjecture, to quarrel as these are done at the heart of a discipline." Wiggins (1993) believes that

"the ultimate coherence of curricula is dependent upon the student having repeated opportunities to directly experience not just adult work but the context of that work: the challenges, messes and dilemmas at the heart of a profession -- knowledge in use."

Marzano (1992) defined authentic assessment as the demonstration of targeted skills and knowledge as they are applied in the workplace. His instructional framework, "Dimensions of Learning," supports a thinking classroom that teaches by individual performance assessment. Marzano (1992) described effective instruction that meets the needs of each student as having five dimensions:

1. the establishment of positive attitudes and perceptions about learning;
2. the presentation of instructional strategies that help acquire and integrate knowledge more effectively;
3. activities that encourage extending and refining knowledge;
4. opportunities to use knowledge meaningfully;
5. support in developing productive habits of mind.

The standards that form the focus for assessment in this model include lifelong learning standards which include "complex reasoning, information processing, communication, collaboration/cooperation, and the ability to use self-regulated, creative, and critical thinking" (Marzano, 1992).

These same criteria were identified by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (Personal communication, 1991) as functional skills by

which workers carry out tasks through managing, using, or handling systems, personal interactions, information, resources, or technology and as enabling skills by which workers carry out functions by using intellectual skills, basic skills, and demonstrable personal characteristics.

Whole language, embodies constructivist theories of instruction that support a logical curriculum "based on movement through successive approximations of masterful performances by the student in order to understand ideas, problems, questions and tasks" (Wiggins, 1995). The reading/writing workshop model of instruction is designed with a focus on the lifelong outcomes described by Wiggins (1995) as "autonomy through self-assessment, self-discipline, self-direction, self-reliance, knowledge, creation, criticism, integration, and control over recurring forms of performance and production."

These targeted deep understandings, competencies, and mature habits of mind, conduct and attitude focus on the achievement of concepts, learning strategies, and problem solving. The assessment of the desired outcomes is through a portfolio which contains performance tasks, products, observations, surveys, and self-assessments. The curriculum in this model is recursive rather than linear with assessment intertwined with instruction as performance is re-worked over time.

The reading/writing model of instruction enables students to gain control of a few worthy tasks, the workplace literacy skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, that both require and reveal deep performance understandings (Gardner & Boix-Mansilla, 1994). "Worthy tasks ... must be found and validated against

performance obligations, contexts, and criteria found in the wider world .... These are the tasks and overarching questions which constitute problems that cause students to use texts to help them conduct inquiry, fashion arguments, and develop quality products" (Wiggins, 1995). "All genuine education terminates in discipline, but it proceeds by engaging the mind in activities worthwhile for their own sake" (Dewey, 1933). "The discipline is the result of guided and effective practice. Only those over-riding worthy tasks can propel the curriculum forward and make learning efficient -- while also keeping the learner motivated to endure the lessons and drill necessary to develop competence in performance .... It is this view that gave birth to the Whole Language movement" (Wiggins, 1995).

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

A problem is a troubled perplexed, trying situation ... it is not [merely] an assigned task .... It is indispensable to distinguish between genuine and mock problems. Does a question naturally suggest itself within some situation? Or is it an aloof thing, only for the purposes of conveying information? Would it arouse observation and engage experimentation outside of school? Or is it the teacher's or textbook's, made a problem for the pupil only because he cannot get the required mark unless he deals with it?

John Dewey (1916).

The problem of how to create an active learning environment in which instruction, curriculum, and assessment are intertwined to produce literate students who exhibit "deep understanding, higher order skills, strategic flexibility, adaptive control and achievement motivation" (Snow, 1989) provides the basis for this study. If students are to become thoughtful workers with the ability to process information; the ability to communicate effectively; the ability to work collaboratively in groups; and the ability to use self-regulated, creative, and critical thinking; they must experience an active learning environment that facilitates those skills which will transfer to the workplace. The Atwell reading/writing model exemplifies such an environment. This is the reason the researcher decided to observe in a specific classroom that used this whole language model.

#### Case Study Methodology

A case study design, as defined by Merriam (1988), is a rich description of a



specific situation, event, program, or phenomenon. This type of design is very holistic and tries to include as much information as possible about the situation being examined. For example, a case study may include interviews and quotes, observations, and physical traces. Through an indepth examination of all of the data collected in the specific environment, the researcher is able to inductively discover generalizations, concepts or hypotheses. Even though the case study examines a specific instance, it can provide direction for the researcher in a similar circumstance through a detailed explanation of the problem.

A case study design was chosen to best reflect the active learning environment of a whole language classroom because of its focus on the relationships among motivation, performance, feedback and reflection. In this case study, the cognitive process of self-reflection is used in order to understand the actor, the action and the interaction in a tenth-grade language arts classroom of heterogeneous, self-selected students under the tutelage of two moderately trained, fully committed teachers in a whole language environment. The object of the study was to document both student and teacher perceptions and student artifacts and outcomes as together they implemented Atwell's whole language reading/writing workshop approach toward the development of literacy. The following questions operationalized the problem of this study to determine if a whole language environment can support the development of literacy:

1. What were the goals of the teachers and the activities used to meet them?
2. Did the teachers view the learning process differently?

3. Did the students view the learning process differently?
4. What student products and activities helped change their literacy development?
5. Does whole language work in developing literacy?

The answers to these questions provide an opportunity to understand how the implementation of a whole language curriculum that supports performance-based assessment might lead to the successful development of literacy.

### Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the findings in this case study that will be necessary for independent researchers to discover the same constructs of meaning in similar settings is dependent upon the researcher's skill at weaving a narration that "... describe[s] systematically the characteristics of variables and phenomena, ... generate[s] and refine[s] conceptual categories, ... discover[s] and validate[s] associations among phenomena, [and] ... compare[s] constructs and postulates generated from phenomena in one setting with comparable phenomena in another setting" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). It will also be determined by the researcher's capability of "... recognizing and handling five major problems: researcher status position, informant choices, social situations and conditions, analytic constructs and premises, and methods of data collection and analysis" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982).

### Bias

Research bias is controlled by including rich primary data which provides the reader with multiple examples from the case record for credibility. This research provides numerous rich descriptions. The researcher in this study was involved as a participant observer. She asked colleagues, who included a coordinator of assessment, a whole language instructor in a middle school, a supervisor of curriculum, and a coordinator of special education services, to review significant data. Also, the researcher used mechanical recorded data for accuracy. Finally, the researcher adhered to the ethical practice of truthfulness and utilized the research skill and perspectives of the reading lab director as a filter to increase trustworthiness. The researcher in this case study was also cognizant of maturation; history; observer effects; selection; regression; mortality; and spurious conclusions, which could affect the clarity of the lens focused on this study (See discussion in Chapter 5).

The fact that this study focuses upon a process nested within a specific natural boundary could provide difficulty for application to occur across groups. It would help to validate the findings of this study if numerous sites with similar designs could be described and benchmarks could be determined for the comparison of categories.

### Context

The design for this study is based on the characteristics of the theories inherent in symbolic interactionism. An essential assumption in this theory is that persons

obtain meaning from interacting with their environment and it is this meaning that drives individual behavior (Blumer, 1969). George Herbert Mead, the father of this theory, focused his ideas on the ability of humans to create thoughtful symbols in order to communicate with others (Hartley, 1992). In symbolic interactionism, the individual makes sense of the world through the conceptual framework that each person has developed in conjunction with his or her language base (Charon, 1992). Each person has many perspectives that are a result of reflection and the construction of meaning with other humans.

Blumer (1969), who coined the term *symbolic interactionism*, developed the theory from the writings of the Pragmatists, including Mead and Dewey. The Pragmatists regarded "the human being as an active being, a thinking, creative, self-directing, defining, dynamic actor, one whose ability to use symbols, define, and alter the environment resulted in a unique being in nature" (Charon, 1992). Blumer (1969) identified three premises on which symbolic interactionism rests:

1. Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them ...
2. Meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows ....
3. Meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person dealing with the things he encounters.

This view of ideas, truths, knowledge, and perceptions as an active process derived by the individual through negotiation with the environment is consistent with

the theories of constructivism, whole language and with the beliefs of naturalistic inquiry. "Symbolic interactionists believe that it is important to gather data through observing people in real situations .... The central principle of symbolic interactionism is that we can understand what is going on only if we understand what the actors themselves believe about their world" (Charon, 1992).

The concept of culture that is defined by ethnographers as "a system of meaningful symbols has much in common with symbolic interactionism ... (Spradley, 1979). "[E]thographers make cultural inferences from three sources: (1) from what people say; (2) from the way people act; and (3) from the artifacts that people use" (Spradley, 1979).

### Subjects

This case study involved a tenth-grade language arts class within a senior high school with an approximate enrollment of 1,646 students. The student body was primarily Caucasian, with minorities comprising 17% of the population. The school district was a southeastern county of 43,000 students in a suburban area that encompassed 345 square miles and contained a population of approximately 210,000 persons.

The researcher was provided access to this specific tenth-grade language arts classroom by the area associate superintendent who had interviewed the researcher for a building principalship while the researcher was still a teacher in the midwest.

The first phase of this study involved the researcher as a newly-hired central office administrator in attendance on September 28, 1991, at a tri-county conference on the restructuring of education. The presentation highlighted language arts, mathematics, science, and vocational education as curricular areas that must go through fundamental changes if the school district was to prepare students for the workplace in the twenty-first century. The area associate superintendent, the supervisor for language arts and the building principal (where this tenth-grade class was created) were interested in research that examined the Atwell curricular model because it represented an active learning environment that combined whole language and performance-based assessment, two areas that they were very interested in introducing into the secondary curriculum. The researcher had been an English teacher, a special educator, and had followed the activities of the Secretary of Labor's Commission on the Achievement of Necessary Skills for secondary students. She was therefore allowed to do her dissertation study in this class.

### Student Participants

The class that was studied included twenty-two students: seven who were considered "at-risk" because of low IOWA and CRT scores; four who were in special education programs; four who were ESL and one student who had been identified as gifted. The remaining six of the students were considered "average" tenth graders. The purpose of creating this specific class was to document the impact on the literacy

development of a heterogeneous group of tenth-grade students through the use of performance-based assessment as defined by the Atwell reading/writing workshop model. As this case study reflects, each of the twenty-two students was unique in his or her literacy development.

### Teacher Participants

The female teacher on this team, Mrs. H., had a B.S. degree in English and an M.S. degree in reading and had been teaching for six years. She was a purist in her perception of whole language and followed precisely the reading/writing workshop model.

The male team member, Mr. S., was a second-year teacher with a B.S. degree in English and an M.A. degree in curriculum and instruction. He was more eclectic in his perspective of teaching models and interjected traditional lessons that included lectures and quizzes.

The teachers in this class collaborated with the reading lab supervisor, Mrs. S., to reflect on the progress of students, because she had extensive experience and education in literacy. She was selected as an Agnes Meyer teacher of the year by the *Washington Post*, was on the Governor's Commission on Literacy, and had received research grants from the International Reading Association to study models of literacy. She was also more eclectic in her philosophy of how to teach reading and writing than Mrs. H. She believed in a more teacher-directed environment.

Mrs. H. and Mr. S. designed the class after attending a Writer's Workshop sponsored by a local university where they read, wrote, and reflected with other language arts instructors. They were influenced by the theories of researchers who included Graves (1983), Goodman (1986), Calkins (1986), and Atwell (1987) among others. They examined the beliefs and practices that underlay their empowerment of students to define their own genres and topics and to evaluate their own reading and writing as students moved through the literacy process in the accumulation of an individual portfolio of pieces.

Mr. S. and Mrs. H. created a whole language class using the reading/writing workshop curriculum. Students chose texts and topics with some guidance from the instructor. The students were given a 45 minute period each day in which to read and write. Mini-lessons, where teachers modeled reading and writing techniques, began each class. This was followed by opportunities for reading and writing, publishing, group and individual sharing and continuous interaction between teacher and student.

#### Protection of Participants' Rights

The proposal submitted to the Human Subjects Review subcommittee of Drake University was determined to provide no risk to the subjects involved in this research project. Consent was obtained from legal guardians for each minor subject in the study and from all adult subjects. All subjects were informed of the voluntary basis of this study and of the privilege to withdraw at any time.



The proposal was also submitted to the supervisor of research in this school district, who reviewed the researcher's request for permission to do a study in the county and determined that it was in compliance.

### Design

This study used qualitative case study methodology. The design emerged from a preliminary analysis of the field which lead to future data collection. During this predocumentation phase, the researcher read numerous articles on literacy and interviewed many experts about the emergence of literacy and how active learning related to the development of workplace literacy.

During the preparation for research, the researcher determined that she would use Spradley's (1980) Descriptive Observation Matrix to organize the case record during the predocumentation phase: "space, actor, activity, object, act, event, time, goal, and feeling." (She also used this coding system to define units of data in the first stage of research.) It was at this point that the researcher discovered Spradley's (1980) definition of "culture as shared knowledge" and the ethnographer's purpose of discovering what the meaning of symbols are in a culture. Spradley compared the perspective of ethnography with that of symbolic interactionism.

Merriam (1988) defines a case study as "a thick description that interprets the meaning of demographic and descriptive data in terms of cultural norms, mores, community values, deep-seated attitudes and notions ...." The researcher determined

that the design for this study would be modeled as closely as possible to her case study methodology because it complimented both the pragmatic and cognitive theories of learning and whole language that had emerged to form the focus of the literature search.

This research follows this definition in the following ways. It includes descriptive, focused and selective observations and interviews. It also contains descriptions of critical incidents, illustrative tasks, and environmental artifacts.

#### Data-Collection (Tools and Procedures)

In order to best understand the process by which data was collected for this study, one must understand the researcher's role as a qualitative investigator in a naturalistic paradigm. In accordance with Guba's (1987) definition of naturalistic inquiry, "... evaluators are subjective partners with stakeholders in the literal creation of evaluation data." Evaluators work to surface realities and then negotiate with stakeholders to attain meaning.

Data in this study was gathered through numerous interviews, observations, and a review of documents from the field. Data was analyzed in order to find common patterns and themes and to develop theoretical propositions.

Tools used to collect data included semi-structured initial and exit interviews, classroom observations, and artifact collection from the school division, the high school, the teachers, and the students.

Spradley's (1979) model of the ethnographic interview, which uses open ended questions, was used to gain indepth information. The majority of interviews were tape recorded in approximately one hour segments. The interviews were semi-structured with initial questions used in an open ended manner to scaffold answers.

Administrators were interviewed initially and at the end of the study to provide a context for this class. Teachers were interviewed continually during observations and at entrance and exit points in the study. Students were interviewed during classroom observations.

The researcher was a participant observer in the classroom approximately twice a week, one hour a day for an 18 week period. Observations were also made of significant meetings and inservices. Observations were tape recorded.

Artifacts from the school division and from the high school were collected to provide a context for literacy development. These artifacts included reflective memos; strategic plans; newspaper articles; board minutes; curriculum guides; photographs; reports; narratives; and audiotapes of inservices, meetings, and interviews.

Artifacts that were collected from the teachers included reports; memos; audiotapes of classes, department meetings, and student conferences; a reflective journal; articles; letters; a status of the class log; and a learning log of student conferences.

Artifacts were also collected from students. Some artifacts were contained in student portfolios. They included notes, reading letters, learning logs, finished work and work in progress, self-assessments, pre and post surveys of attitude towards and

experience with reading and writing, and editing conferences. Historical records were also collected on each student.

Persons who were interviewed included the division superintendent, the area associate superintendent (who was responsible for this high school), the supervisor for language arts, the building principal, and the director of the reading lab at the high school. They were asked open ended questions to measure their degree of support for a whole language curriculum in this classroom. Focused interviews with the teachers and twenty-two students in the English class formed the content for the primary study itself (see Appendix A).

### Selection of Participants

Convenience sampling was employed in this case study to enable the researcher to use the participants who were members of the English class. This sampling method is purposeful rather than representative.

Two groups of subjects were interviewed. The first group of subjects were central office and building administrators, who provided the context for this case study. The second group, the two teachers and the students in the class, formed the primary participants in this study.

The intent of the school principal was to create a heterogeneous environment for this class. Both students and teachers volunteered to be a part of the pilot classroom, and they gave permission to be a part of this study.

## Data Analysis

The constant comparative method of data analysis described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was used to analyze data collected from interviews, observations and artifacts. Analysis of data was done in three stages with the fourth stage constituting the actual writing of the theory:

### Stage One.

All of the data was reviewed (read and listened to) without stopping for reflection to get a general understanding and feel for the overall context in which these teachers and students existed and a general understanding of the teachers and students themselves. Information was transcribed and sorted intuitively into subject areas that emerged while using Spradley's (1980) Descriptive Observational Matrix. These general subject areas were then used to sort data into various folders according to properties that evolved developmentally. As meaningful incidents were identified from the data according to the subject areas, they were organized in a sequential manner.

### Stage Two.

The data was critically and reflectively reviewed again by the researcher and systematically classified into 15 categories according to definitions and rules that the researcher derived. Each time a conflict arose with preexisting categories a new one was created until no data remained. The general categories were analyzed to be able

to integrate overlapping categories. The number of categories diminished to 13.

### Stage Three.

The data was analyzed numerous times to make inferences about the relationships among the 13 categories. As categories became saturated, bridges of meaning surfaced that revealed common patterns. It was out of these common patterns that three themes emerged.

### Stage Four.

The stakeholders involved in this case study, agreed that certain common elements in these themes were dominant. These elements emerged from constant comparison and negotiation and became what has been defined by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as "grounded theory."

## Closing Comment

The conceptual idea behind the whole language philosophy is that language is a living organism. It exists in relation to other human beings and because of that is constantly changing. Students are supported in the investigation of their own literacy both individually and collaboratively. Like any grass-roots movement, the whole-language curricular model could be in danger of becoming just a "bandwagon" idea that will be diluted through imitation. In order to prevent the superficial use of this new pedagogy, the teacher must understand both the process and context involved in reading and writing. Both reading and writing involve complex negotiation between

the reader or writer, the text or audience, the purpose and the context. The assessment of this process must reflect not only its intellectual and social complexity, but also the important roles of school, home and the community in literacy development.

Graves (1984) believes that context and process are extremely important in research that focuses on reading and writing. "[R]esearchers must describe in detail the full context of data gathering and the processes of learning and teaching .... The meaning of any situation is contained in the context of the act .... [W]riting is not done in a vacuum .... [I]t is part of a social context in which children, teachers, administrators, parents, and a community carry out their values about writing. These values and practices affect what ... [the student] ... does when he writes. They affect topic choice, interactions with other children and the teacher, his style of solving problems. It is difficult to know what aspects of the broader context affect the composing process and the child's voice in the process. This is one of the least explored areas in writing research .... Research in the '80's needs to include ethnographic context ...."

The whole language model described in this study is based on the direct assessment of learning: students and teachers daily involved in formative evaluation, developing individual goals for success, and inquiring about real literacy problems as they arise. For research purposes, an authentic assessment of this transformational process is required. The qualitative case study design is appropriate to gain an indepth contextual assessment.

The first phase of this study immersed the researcher in districtwide restructuring efforts through workshops, attendance at school board meetings, physical traces like reports and memos, and unstructured interviews. The intent of the researcher was to discover through the stakeholders in the macrocosm "multiple socially constructed realities" (Guba, 1987) that would lead the researcher to a rich environment in a microcosm where consensus on the meaning and existence of those realities might generate themes. This rich environment became the classroom that formed the basis for this case study. The researcher has attempted to include all of the influences that would have a bearing on generating a grounded theory of literacy using a constant comparative methodology. The researcher recorded information from three perspectives: that of a participant observer, that of a student of literacy garnered from literature, and that of a naturalistic inquirer.



## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

Genuine, independent reading and writing are not the icing on the cake, the reward we proffer gifted twelfth graders who've survived the curriculum. Reading and writing are the cake. Given what we know about adolescents' lives and priorities, can we afford to continue to sacrifice literate school environments for skills environments?

Atwell (1987)

#### Context Characteristics

The purpose of this dissertation was to describe and document the perceptions of twenty-two tenth-grade English students and their two language arts teachers as they implemented Atwell's whole language reading/writing workshop approach in the development of true literacy. True literacy was defined in this study as the ability to think critically and to apply one's knowledge base in the solving of actual problems.

This study is based on the characteristics inherent in whole language -- that persons obtain meaning from interacting with their environment and that it is this meaning that enables their acquisition of new knowledge. Goodman (1986) described the literacy process as the student actually using meaningful knowledge from his/her environment and experience in learning to read and write. Whole language shares the same perspective as constructivism and pragmatism, two theories that view knowledge as temporary, developmental, socially and culturally mediated. Learning occurs in an

active environment of the whole language classroom because of concrete experience, collaboration with peers and the teacher and reflection. These are the same lifelong learning skills identified by Marzano (1992) as "the ability to communicate effectively; the ability to work collaboratively in groups; and the ability to use self-regulated, creative, and critical thinking" that are needed in the workplace.

This case study examines the process by which two teachers create a classroom environment that is built on an understanding of individual learning characteristics, the whole language method of developing literacy, and the authenticity of performance assessment that is intertwined with curriculum and instruction.

A primary objective of the mission and vision for the entire school district in which research for this study was done was the empowerment of all students to learn. In order to accomplish this feat, the curriculum had to be restructured. The driving force for restructuring was the creation of active learning environments where instruction, the curriculum and assessment could be enmeshed. The focus of the division superintendent became how he could give support to individual schools and staff in their creative efforts to develop effective learning environments so that all students could learn. The philosophies of the superintendent and the associate superintendent for instruction were complimentary to the tenets of whole language and the belief that performance-based assessment was the most equitable way for a student to be evaluated.

Under their key leadership, the school division developed a curriculum of excellence for all students that emphasized: moral and social responsibility;

multicultural, global, and national perspectives; technology; problem solving; integration; comprehensiveness; developmental appropriateness; relevance; performance-based evaluation; flexibility, articulation, and collaboration.

The teachers in this study were involved with counselors, librarians, administrators, supervisors, and other language arts teachers in the first attempts to restructure the curriculum. They examined the writings of experts like Atwell, Graves, Rief, and Calkins. As a result, they incorporated ideas about whole language, literacy, and portfolio assessment, along with similar themes in other literature, to create the following vision statement:

The focus of the K-12 language arts curriculum is the developing role of the learner and the changing role of the teacher in the classroom as they integrate reading, writing, talking, listening, and thinking. The curriculum addresses the needs of the learner. Each learner comes with a variety of personal experiences, sometimes involving more than one language. These experiences represent only a starting point on the continuum of language development. It is essential for further development that the learner be an active participant in the learning process. ... For students, the revised curriculum is a plan to help them find their own learning paths while providing direction for future learning. The key is student ownership in the learning process. ... [The] goal each day is to implement a curriculum which is: developmentally appropriate, ... integrated, ... challenging, ... meaningful, ... dynamic, ... multicultural, ... aesthetic (K-12 Language Arts Curriculum Guide, Unpublished Final Draft, 1992).

Both teachers continued to collaborate with the supervisor of language arts in the county, as part of a total restructuring initiative that redefined how reading and writing were to be taught in classrooms K-12. The language arts supervisor believed that the teachers were on the cutting edge, but had concerns about their ability to bring about change in such a strongly traditional English department as existed at

their high school. She hoped that the teachers' enthusiasm and passion for student success would outweigh their seeming lack of adherence to the current curriculum action plan and the traditional standard for assessment and awarding of grades.

With permission from their principal, both teachers visited elementary schools where cooperative learning was used with heterogeneous groups of students in the classroom. They also observed middle school teachers who were using reading and writing workshop designs based on the Atwell model. With confirmation from their visits, the two English teachers decided to pilot a reading/writing class for a heterogeneous population of students patterned after the Atwell model and its use of performance-based assessment.

The school community of the westside high school where this study occurred had embraced the principles of the Effective School Research through which emerged the acronym, E.S.T.E.E.M. (Educating Students Through Excellence, Equity, and Mentoring). This statement became the vision for the high school. The belief among those responsible for the educational success of the students at this school was that "a positive attitude about yourself and the confidence to know that you can control your life are paramount in achieving a sense of E.S.T.E.E.M."

The principal was aware that only by supporting innovation in small successful pockets could he facilitate a change without destroying the esprit de corps of the faculty. The first two goals in the school's annual plan reflected a collaborative effort to broaden the curriculum:

1. Students will demonstrate improvement in expository writing.

2. Instructional activities and programs will be developed and implemented to emphasize the interrelationship of student learning.

The strategies designed to support these goals included:

...suggestions for incorporating writing activities into the established Curriculum Action Plan for every course; ...before and after school writing lab available; ...[writing assignments across the curriculum] ...to be evaluated by an interdepartmental committee; essay contests ...; ...students ... [able to] ...resubmit written assignments for reconsideration of grades; ...interdepartmental review committee to monitor and write strategies for the writing program; ...holistic grading training for all staff members; ...establishment of an upgraded writing lab...(Annual School Plan, Unpublished Final Draft, October, 1991).

These goals and strategies, developed during a self-study, provided the opportunity for the teachers in this study to experiment with both reading and writing and different forms of assessment in a heterogeneous environment. The principal was fascinated by the design for a heterogeneous class that incorporated a whole language model. Not only was this the only whole language class in any high school in the school division; it was also, the only one that had developed its own performance-based assessment. His hope was that this model would be one of the catalysts for change in his building.

Mr. S. and Mrs. H. have come to this high school with a mission that all students can become literate. It is their goal - that each student become self-actualized --that I feel comfortable with. I know where they are coming from. This is why I believe that they should have a lot of freedom in developing this class (Principal, Initial Interview, November, 1991).

#### Discussion of the Context

This case study began with the use of Spradley's (1980) Descriptive

Observation Matrix: "space, actor, activity, objects present, act, event, time, goal, and feeling" to organize the case record during the predocumentation stage so that no part of the field would be overlooked and so the interrelatedness of data would become apparent. Use of the matrix was continued during the analysis stage.

As the researcher closed Chapter 3, she talked about the importance of context. As the researcher begins Chapter 4, she has used agreed upon key issues from national, state and local stakeholders to gain a perspective about the development of literacy in a tenth-grade language arts classroom. The clustering of coded data in this matrix provides a perspective that the current system of education is not working and that a new system needs to be created that supports the belief that all students can become literate. Leaders at all levels have a sustained vision that an educational environment can be created that supports human motivation to learn. This vision led to the implementation of concrete plans to support the restructuring of curricular frameworks, professional development, accountability assessment and outcomes for students.

**Table 1**  
**Observation Matrix Chart**

	NATIONAL	STATE	DISTRICT	SCHOOL	CLASSROOM
Space	Charlottesville, Virginia	Southeastern State	Southeastern School Division	Western High School	English 10
Actor	Bush/Clinton	State Superintendent	Superintendent	Principal	Mrs. H/Mr. S
Activity	<i>Governors' Conference</i>	Educational Collaboration	Restructuring Effort	Restructuring School	Restructuring English Classroom
Object	<i>Nation at Risk</i> <i>Carnegie Report</i> <i>Winning the Brain Race</i>	<i>America 2000 Report</i>	Site-based Management Effective Schools Research Total Quality Management	Annual Plan Self-Study/Surveys	<i>In the Middle</i> by Nancie Atwell
Act	<i>America 2000</i> written.	<i>Common Core</i> created.	<i>Six Year Strategic Plan</i> developed.	Change process begun.	Reading/writing workshop model set up.
Event	National Restructuring	State Restructuring	Restructuring of Curriculum/Assessment	School Restructuring:  Quality Circles Heterogeneous Classes Performance Assessments Writing Across Curriculum	Class Restructuring Create Performance-Based Assessments: 1. Quests 2. Reading Letters 3. Conferences With Teachers/Peers 4. Rubrics 5. Writing/Reading Portfolios 6. Mini-lessons 7. Publishing
Time	1989	1990-1993	1987-1993	1990-1992	1991-1992
Goal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All students will start to school ready to learn.</li> <li>2. The high school graduation rate will increase to 90%.</li> <li>3. All students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter.</li> <li>4. U.S. students will be first in the world in science and math achievement.</li> <li>5. Every adult American will be literate.</li> <li>6. All schools will be free of drugs and violence.</li> </ol>	<b>World Class Schools:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. center on outcomes;</li> <li>2. hold schools accountable for results;</li> <li>3. hold firm to the belief that all students can learn;</li> <li>4. emphasize collaboration.</li> </ol>	<b>All students will become:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. good thinkers and problem-solvers;</li> <li>2. effective communicators;</li> <li>3. users of technology;</li> <li>4. understanding of their own and others cultures;</li> <li>5. good citizens in our democracy and in the world community;</li> <li>6. mentally and physically productive through wellness and aesthetics.</li> </ol>	<b>Embrace the principles of Effective School Research: Enhancing students through Excellence, Equity, and Mentoring.</b>	<b>Facilitating each student's awareness and development of his/her own literacy.</b>
Feeling	All citizens are valuable in our changing workforce to keep America globally competitive.	All students can meet world class standards.	All students can learn.	All students can learn.	All students can learn.

### Themes

The reading/writing workshop curriculum model around which this English 10 class was designed, entailed an instructional approach described by Wittrock (1983), Atwell (1987), and Willinsky (1990) as "reader response," which is a theory that describes reading, writing, speaking and listening as a generative process for developing meaning. The principles involve the teacher facilitating learner motivation, attention to important information, and the generation of associations and relationships which are the critical principles of the reading/writing workshop model. These principles are exemplified through: daily conferencing among teacher and student and peers, teachers modeling reading and writing techniques, at least thirty minutes each day devoted to student reading or writing, opportunities for students to publish, routines that establish opportunities for group sharing, student ownership for learning, and a positive teacher attitude that each student will improve in his or her reading and writing.

Daily documentation charted growth as students read and wrote literary responses, wrote different genres of literature, conferenced with teachers and peers, edited after each draft, and kept logs of skills. The workshop approach to teaching literacy centered on student goals and expectations. Grades were based on individual improvement and progress toward goals (see Appendix D).

Each student in the tenth-grade reading/writing class kept a portfolio of his or her work. The portfolio told a story of each student's development as a reader and writer during the year. Not only did the portfolio contain reading letters, and different



genres of writing; it also, contained self-evaluations of the reading/writing process and of the products that resulted from this process. Each student chose what to write and what to read. They interacted with teachers and peers as they reflected on their own ability to communicate. Through each of the students who agreed to be interviewed, one can see the possibilities in diversity, depth, growth and self-evaluation that is facilitated by such an assessment. The portfolios also provided evidence of the diversity of thinking that goes on in one classroom. They allowed the reader glimpses into each student's life -- the social interactions with peers, parents, teachers, the classroom and the community that support the emergence of literacy. These interactions can't all be demonstrated nor can all of the thinking that went into each of these student's products. To be able to understand completely the development of each student, one would have to be directly involved. The following excerpts are a sampling of what is contained in each portfolio, reflections by each student on their work and the class. The actual portfolios contained all of the drafts that contributed to each piece, the self-evaluations, the complete reading logs and letters, and journals. These are the most effective pieces, comments about the best-liked books, a sampling of log entries and evaluative comments by the teachers. The writing stands at whatever stage the student reached without any further corrections. You will be able to hear the student's voices as they tell you how they think.

Erika was new to the school. She had moved from another larger community where she had become lost in the big high school. She had been placed in average English classes and had never really been challenged before this class.

Jason was a tenth-grade student who had always had trouble in traditional English classes. He was exposed to textbook, lecture, test formats all through middle school. He was not successful with the traditional methods of teaching grammar and spelling. He tried to accomplish classwork if he liked the teacher, but he had never passed a spelling test and had never read a book. Because of his inability to focus on tasks in the classroom, he had been referred for special education a number of times.

Keith seemed bright, but flunked every class. He refused to turn anything in. His best friend was hearing impaired and Keith wanted to become an interpreter. He taught himself to sign so that he could better communicate with his friend. His goals and his level of service outside of school were lofty as he voluntarily worked with disabled persons.

As a gifted student, Steve had been part of the Signet program since elementary school. He had his own agenda and was not interested in a majority of the requirements in a traditional English class. He was motivated to become an active member of this whole language class because it afforded him the opportunity to work on a science fiction book that he had been researching.

Though she never qualified for the learning disability program, Jennifer had been referred for testing in order to obtain academic support. She was found to be a slow learner who had very average abilities.

Doug was a fifteen-year-old sophomore. He had studied grammar in a very traditional way. Last year, he had vocabulary taken from a workbook to memorize, spelling, grammar lessons from a text, tests that required the correction of mistakes in

sample sentences, and assigned literature to read and answer questions over. He never remembered using any of the information he had learned after taking the test that covered the material. The only writing assignment he had last year was a book report over a class novel. Everyone was assigned *The Pigman* to read and to complete worksheets over.

Samantha had just returned from Mexico. Her father was with the government and had been transferred to Mexico for a number of years. She missed her previous school and her friends. She said that the school was less structured and that students had more academic freedom. She felt that she had learned more in her classes before returning to the states. According to her counselor, Sam had gotten involved with drugs in Mexico and her parents were very concerned about her emotional state. Even though she had earned bad grades in Mexico, her belief was that the American school in Mexico was far superior to this school.

Teresa was an average fifteen-year-old sophomore student who was trying to gain a sense of herself in relationship to her teachers and parents. She wanted to improve in her writing ability and to gain a better sense of self-confidence.

Trina was a sixteen-year-old girl who liked to read horror novels. Her favorite novelist was Stephen King. She liked the freedom to choose her own writing topics and to read what interested her. She was very serious about all of her work. Her writing was helping her to work through some very difficult abuse issues in her family.

Michael came to this school during the third quarter. He had been reared by a

father in Tennessee who did not believe in public education. Therefore, Michael had never attended school on a regular basis. He did not have the credits to graduate with a standard diploma.

Robert was the only student to get his work published in the school anthology, *Home Grown*. He wrote a beautiful poem entitled, "Generation."

In middle school, Joe had basic English classes with grammar and reading books. He studied parts of speech and mechanics and would have worksheets to acquire the knowledge. He would use diagraming to learn grammatical structure. He would go over information and would memorize it for the tests. When he studied grammar, he would think it boring and useless. He would get confused easily because grammar seemed senseless.

Everett's middle school experience in English was standard with weekly spelling tests, grammar and reading books. All tests consisted of vocabulary and sentence correction. Ninth grade was the same. Information was presented on overheads, memorized for exams and then forgotten.

Nathan's sports activities got in the way of his doing homework on a regular basis. His insecurities about himself caused problems in his ability to accept others who were different.

Kandis had just moved to this high school in the fall from a much larger school in another county. Having always been in a city environment, the rural setting was quite an adjustment. All of her previous English classes were designed in a routine fashion with textbooks, lectures and tests. These classes didn't deviate from

the year's schedule. All of the assignments were based on the grammar book's suggestions. This whole language class was the first opportunity that Kandis had ever had to actually learn to write. In her former classes, the structure didn't put her in a position to have to think.

Matt was a fifteen-year-old tenth grader. He had always lived in the western part of the county. His English classes had always been "guided and boring." Each year, he had done vocabulary work, assigned reading and grammar. The primary writing assignment was a book report. He primarily remembered learning vocabulary.

J.B.'s attention deficit disorder had impeded his ability to succeed in a traditional English classroom. He needed immediate feedback while learning reading and writing skills that were derived from his individual literacy needs.

Connie was a tenth-grade student with very little self-confidence about her academic capabilities. She had written the same essay for the past four years about getting lost in a mall as a young child. Her parents were very strict and were very concerned about her lack of progress in both reading and writing.

Son was a senior this year. She was very serious about learning English. She felt that American students were lazy. In Korea, she had studied very hard so that she would have a good future.

Shakila was a twenty-year-old student from Afghanistan. She commented that this whole language class facilitated her thinking in English for the first time. The teacher conferences about her essays embarrassed her because the subjects that she wrote about were so personal. It was really a cultural adjustment for a Muslim

woman to interact with a male teacher. She was serious about school and worked very hard to become more literate.

Reina commented about the lack of progress that she had made in ESL classes in comparison to this class. She was a sixteen-year-old student who described herself as a nonwriter. By the end of the year, she was writing interesting essays about her native country, El Salvador.

Nu learned how to advocate for himself in this class. As a native-born Chinese person, he found American history was very difficult. He was able to explain his difficulties with the subject in an essay to his teacher and to ultimately improve his grade.

Interview data; observations; and physical traces like memos, reports, journals, portfolios, logs, letters, etcetera were analyzed in order to find comparable categories and themes that answered the original questions:

1. What were the goals of the teachers and the activities used to meet them?
2. Did the teachers view the learning process differently?
3. Did the students view the learning process differently?
4. What student products and activities helped change their literacy development?
5. Does whole language work in developing literacy?

During the first stage of the analysis, the researcher read or listened to all of the data without stopping for reflection to get a general understanding and feel for the

overall context in which these teachers and students existed and a general understanding of the teachers and students themselves. The researcher then transcribed the information and began to sort it into subject areas that emerged while using Spradley's (1980) Descriptive Observational Matrix: "space, actor, activity, objects present, act, event, time, goal, and feeling." The general subject areas (teacher perceptions, student perceptions, whole language, active learning, performance assessments, teaching strategies, evidence of student literacy) were then used to sort data according to properties that evolved developmentally. As meaningful incidents were identified from the data according to the subject areas, they were organized in a sequential manner.

During the second stage of analysis, the researcher had Atwell's reading/writing workshop model of literacy; Snow's constructivist model of literacy; the school district's model that intertwined instruction, curriculum and assessment; and an enormous amount of data in the form of observations, interviews, memos, reports, journals, portfolios, logs, and letters. The data collection process in this study was collaborative as the researcher worked with the teachers and students, while interviewing and observing in the classroom environment, to reflect upon the process of literacy development. To the researcher's gratification, as she continued to critically and reflectively analyze the data, the following questions emerged from interviews with the teacher-researchers themselves that could be systematically classified into 15 categories according to definitions and rules that she had derived:

1. What does locus of control have to do with successful student learning?

2. How does a class that is organized around whole language and performance-based assessment affect students who have learned English as a second language? - Does literacy become multidimensional?
3. How will a student who is language disabled handle a performance-based, reading/writing workshop approach to teaching English?
4. Can a system that has individual growth as its only external absolute sustain motivation?
5. Is metacognition an integral part of a performance-based assessment in a whole language class?
6. Is reflective thinking tied to intelligence?-- Can it be learned on different levels?
7. How does previous academic experience affect student growth in a reading/writing workshop environment?
8. How does the student's self-concept affect his or her perception of responsibility in the performance-based assessment of the reading/writing workshop model?
9. Are parents and the home environment part of this reciprocal partnership in the performance-based assessment of a reading/writing workshop?
10. How does the student's internalization of the literacy process affect skill acquisition?
11. Is it imperative for successful growth that the student view the teacher as facilitator for learning?
12. What does a student with an attention deficit disorder need to succeed in the reading/writing workshop environment?
13. Can a student who is highly dependent succeed in a whole language environment?
14. How does the flexible environment of the reading/writing workshop and performance assessment affect learning?
15. What part does reciprocal teaching play in the reading/writing workshop?



With these fifteen questions as a start, the researcher was able to look for general categories that could be formed. Through analysis, she was able to integrate overlapping categories. Questions 2 and 9 became part of the personal and social experience of the student and questions 7 and 10 became part of the organized knowledge base of skills that each student had acquired. The following 13 categories reoccurred as viable after being checked for overlap, relationships, and ambiguities:

1. teacher versus student control of learning,
2. personal and social experience of student,
3. language disabilities in students,
4. student motivation,
5. learning strategies like metacognition,
6. self-concept of student,
7. authentic assessment of student growth,
8. skills as organized knowledge,
9. student ownership for learning,
10. impulsivity of students,
11. students as independent learners,
12. flexible environment of classroom,
13. reciprocal teaching.

As the researcher continued to compare and contrast data, she began to build on categories by using them as the basis for further examination of transcribed interviews, observations, and artifacts. She began to build bridges between known and new units of information in one category to surface new relationships. As categories became saturated, regularities began to emerge, and the researcher experienced a new sense of integration. The number of categories eventually diminished to become three emerging themes. Those themes could be defined as:

1. changing teacher roles,
2. changing student roles,
3. changing student concepts.

Within the theme of changing teacher roles, the researcher saw how the teachers were promoting constructive learning through the roles of observer, facilitator, evolutionist, emancipator, and reflector. Within the theme of changing student roles, the researcher saw examples of constructivism in the classroom through students becoming intuitive in their use of skills, metacognitive thinkers, readers, writers, speakers, and listeners. Finally, the researcher saw constructed student outcomes through student conceptual change in their development of independence, security, awareness of authentic growth through products and the attainment of individual benchmarks.

The following table provides a visual overview of how the 13 categories fall under each of the three themes:

Table 2

Visual Overview of Categories

Changing teacher roles		Changing student roles		Changing student concepts	
1. teacher vs. student control	observer	5. strategies like meta-cognition	metacognitive thinker	3. language disabilities	independence
2. personal/ social exp.	facilitator	8. skills as organized knowledge	intuitive user of skills	4. student motivation	security
9. student ownership	evolutionist	10. impulsivity of students	reader writer listener speaker	6. self-concept	awareness of authentic growth
12. flexible environment	emancipator			7. authentic assess. of growth	
13. reciprocal teaching	reflector			11. student as independent learner	

In the following three sections, narratives and tables are organized around these three themes.

### Changing Teacher Roles (Promoting Constructive Learning)

The teachers in this class accepted their status as professionals by continually evaluating themselves, their pupils, and the system in which they taught. They assumed the responsibility for supporting each student in developing a base of knowledge that would allow the student to interpret new situations, to solve problems, to think and to learn. The teachers had common instructional beliefs as whole language teachers that influenced their implementation of the reading/writing curricular philosophy and its accompanying assessment model. The learning environment that they created was recursive, as these teachers continually redefined themselves relative to individual student need. The traditional teacher roles of presenter, evaluator, and disciplinarian were redefined. As the researcher observed in the classroom, the teacher roles of observer, facilitator, evolutionist, emancipator, and reflector emerged.

#### Teacher as an Observer

*Observer* in the context of this whole language environment meant that the teacher was very attentive to individual student needs, taking note of where the student was in the learning process, inferring the next direction that the student

needed to pursue and celebrating achievements. The researcher found these teachers to be nonjudgemental observers of students reading, writing, speaking and listening. The teachers in this reading/writing classroom used performance assessment in their observation of students. Well-constructed portfolios contained information about each student's reading and writing that could be used to direct instruction for that student. Multiple measures of student work included reading letters, writing drafts and final pieces as well as reflections about student performances completed by peers and teachers.

From the beginning of the class, the teachers felt positive about what they were observing both in the production of work and in the behavior of their students.

Mrs. H:        So far, the quality of work these students have produced has been encouraging. We have observed no negative commentary regarding the makeup of the class. We have also written no disciplinary referrals. In addition, parental response has been completely positive (Interview, November 12, 1991).

Mr. S:        We have observed improvement in the students' writing -- both the quality of ideas and level of thinking, and the mechanics (Interview, November 18, 1991).

Mrs. H:        In addition, we see a positive attitude towards the class and a high level of engagement. There is a tremendous amount of interaction among the students in the class which creates opportunities for students to learn from one another (Interview, November 12, 1991).

The class was structured around the principles of time, ownership, and response. Time was provided for students to read and to write. Students chose topics

and texts, with guidance. And the teachers gave immediate response while students were engaged in the processes of reading and writing.

In order to provide the principal with data regarding this class, various types of assessments were collected: prior reading test scores on both the ITBS and the TAP, and post tests on the Gates; pre and post use of the San Diego Inventory of Reading Attitude; pre and post surveys about reading and writing created from Atwell material.

Assessment of student achievement was also on-going in the workshop. Daily documentation reflected the student's progress. Monday through Wednesday, students worked on individual pieces of writing. Students responded to roll call by stating their plans for the day. This was recorded in a daily log called the status of the class. Conferences occurred as Mr. S. and Mrs. H., the two teachers, circulated among students, helping them with drafts in progress. Editing conferences occurred when students had completed their drafts and had self-edited. During editing conferences, skills were taught within the context of the student's writing. The educational conference sheet for each student documented the teaching of grammar in context.

Mrs. H:       The results have been dramatic. I have documentation of students who, in September wrote one paragraph drafts filled with run-on sentences, and who now write in paragraph form and combine sentences correctly (Interview, November 12, 1991).

Reading workshop occurred on Thursday and Friday, and Mr. S. and Mrs. H. made weekly notations for each student regarding the student's reading progress

through books and the student's response to the reading. The students and teachers also wrote individual goals on reading record sheets during the brief conferences. In addition, students wrote a weekly letter demonstrating thoughtful, critical responses to their books, and addressing issues of theme and author purpose.

Mrs. H: We expect students to evaluate and analyze what they read, and by responding to these letters with a return note, Mr. S. and I are able to help students make connections and move to higher levels of thinking (Interview, November 12, 1991).

Final assessment in the reading and writing workshop was based on progress toward goals and student performance assessments that were collected in portfolios. Documentation of progress was recorded on the evaluation and conference form. Students were required to keep all drafts and finished pieces as well as their collection of reading letters. Therefore, at the end of the grading period, the teachers had documentation of each student's participation in the writing and reading processes, and they had evidence of what the student could produce.

Mr. S: A primary concern is how the assessment procedures we use fits in with the high school English program as a whole. Moving to total performance-based assessment is a dramatic departure from the norm, and we feel it is important that our students are able to move on to other English courses and succeed. The holistic scoring rubric that we use, for example, to evaluate writing papers was developed by adapting the county scoring rubric (See Appendix B) (Interview, November 18, 1991).

The workshop approach to teaching literacy was student centered. Goals and expectations were written for each student and progress was monitored. Grades were based on individual improvement and progress toward goals. By contrast, in the traditional English class the established curriculum was the focus and the students were graded according to their mastery of the curriculum. Assessment usually took the form of tests, projects, and writings. Therefore, a "C" in a traditional curriculum indicated how much of the tenth-grade curriculum that a student had mastered.

Mrs. H: The issue of assessment is a complex one. Mr. S. and I are continually reflecting on and modifying our evaluation procedures; indeed we use our assessment to plan and teach, not to simply arrive at a grade. In the workshop, Duane's "C" cannot be compared to Joe's "C." Duane and Joe had different abilities and levels of skill when they entered the course, and they had different goals and expectations. I believe that many teachers will have difficulty accepting this form of assessment. But as we move toward heterogeneous grouping, it is an important issue to address (Interview, November 14, 1991).

Mr. S: The average students will benefit from the more challenging curriculum and from the modeling that the enriched students provide. But they should also have the opportunity to succeed. It seems wrong to me to place students in a class and ask them to produce a level of work which we know they are not capable of. My job, I believe, is to help each student become a better writer, reader, and thinker, and not to simply cover the curriculum (Interview, February, 21, 1992).

Mrs. H: We do not believe the curriculum should be tossed. Mr. S. and I are attending to the tenth-grade English objectives, and most are addressed on a continuing basis in the workshop. We are developing strategies to deal

with the others. There surely is a way to have a curriculum -- general expectations for ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders -- that allows for fair assessment of individual growth and provides the opportunity for all students to succeed (Interview with Mrs. H. and Mrs. S., February 28, 1992).

The teachers in this class were participant observers in each student's literacy development. Observations conducted in the classroom during this case study were structured around the syllabus for this class which was based on the performance-based standards contained in the reading/writing workshop. (See Appendix C) They observed students in their topic selection, writing, revision, editing, and sharing. They also observed the level of critical thinking and risk-taking involved in the development of written pieces. They observed the development and attaining of personal writing and reading goals. They also observed the selection of books and the written and verbal responses to each student's reading. The continuous observations were an integral part of the authentic assessment component in this curricular model.

#### Teacher as a Facilitator

In addition to the role of participant observer, the teachers facilitated students' cognitive development. The teacher's role was first defined by the superintendent, associate superintendent and the principal as "a facilitator-coach who emphasized collaboration that enabled the student to produce high quality by drawing on the



various strengths of the team members" (Interviews conducted on November 4, 1991).

The reading lab teacher, Mrs. S., reinforced this image as she explained the collaborative environment of this English class:

I have been very interested in how the whole language design could promote literacy among students who have not been successful up to this point in a traditional English environment. I am also in hopes that the teachers in this class will be able to share their findings with other staff in the quality circles that have been created for the purpose of supporting restructuring efforts. Whole language is an important element in the redesign of how to teach English (Interview, November 18, 1991).

Teacher roles were embodied in the evolution of the curriculum that they facilitated. The class began in September with the introduction of a reading/writing process facilitated by the exchange of letters between teachers and students:

Dear Readers,

This year you will be writing letters, one each week, to Mr. S. and me. In these letters you will be talking about your books, writers, reading, and writing. Mr. S. and I will write back. These letters will be a record of your written conversations about literature and the learning and reading we do together (Journal Entry, Mrs. H, September, 1991).

Rather than requiring a specified number of books to read and a predetermined evaluation method that consisted of so many oral reports and a written examination, students were led into a long term arrangement facilitating reflection:

In your letters tell us about your books. Tell what is happening, but also tell what you think about the book. Tell what you like and what you don't like. Talk about the characters and what you think of them. Tell how the book makes you feel and why. Tell about anything that is confusing, boring, or interesting (Journal Entry, Mrs. H, September, 1991).

Students were free to read and to write critically:

Do not concern yourself with neatness, spelling, or grammatical correctness in these letters. (Obviously we must be able to read your handwriting.) We are interested in your ideas, not perfect writing. You should not worry about revising or correcting your letters. We will spend time in Writing Workshop polishing your writing skills. These letters should be a thoughtful response to the books you are reading (Journal Entry, Mrs. H, September, 1991).

The curriculum was created by the teachers supporting the students to start where they were in time, place, culture and development:

We look forward to reading your letters. We will learn much from you as we read and write together and discover the pleasure to be found in good books (Journal Entry, Mrs. H, September, 1991).

Reading letters provided a positive way of assessing student reading while facilitating growth. The following students felt that the reading letters were an individualized assessment providing them with the freedom to not only choose their own books, but also the opportunity to discuss their thoughts without threat.

Erika: Through conferencing with my teachers and my peers about my writing and thoughts about my reading, I have learned a lot about myself as a black woman (Interview, April 23, 1992).

Erika finished her first anthology book called, *The Black Woman*. Her relationship with her teachers was so intact that she felt free to reflect upon herself very personally:

It interesting for me to find out all of the myths about black women that are not true. This book shows a black woman as society will never portray her. But I think some of the writers did not express enough of how it should be and what we (black women) can do to help the plight of blacks. Instead, the book cried out excuses like a closed door in our face that won't let us pass through and used the excuse that if we didn't have someone holding that door we could make it through life without any problems. First of all -- I disagree, because we are not in slavery days. This is the 20th century, and we live in one of the most liberated countries in the world. We have a choice whether or not to reach a higher level. You make that choice (Portfolio, Reading Letter, January 9, 1992).

Mrs. H. knew that reading was a constructive process and that for a reader like Erika to give meaning to the text was vital for her to develop a depth of comprehension.

Dear Erika,

I'm pleased with the level of analysis I'm reading here. Also I'm impressed with your persistence in sticking with a book you were getting frustrated with. So what you're saying is that you wanted a more positive attitude or more possible solutions in the writings?

Mrs. H. (Portfolio, Reading Letter Response, January 9, 1992)

For a student like Teresa, who needed an extra amount of time and teacher interaction, this class was perfect. The responsiveness of the teachers supported her in taking risks in her literacy development that she would not have attempted in isolation.

These teachers give you time to read and to write in class. This way you don't have to work at home alone. You can ask questions when you feel the need to and you will get an answer the same day (Interview, March 18, 1992).

Teresa had never had a class like this before. She had never been allowed to chose what she wanted to read. Before she had been assigned a book to read and was expected to write a report.

Reading letters give you the opportunity to write to your teacher each week to provide them with a breakdown of your weekly progress. You write if you like the book and a summary of what you have read with examples. I like teenage books especially. I just finished reading a book called *Gentle Hands* -- it was about this guy who fell in love with this girl. His grandfather was a Nazi soldier and it was a story of how this involvement affected their relationship. The reading letter allows you to ask questions (Interview, March 18, 1992).

Teresa needed the teacher to actually read her book in order for Teresa to feel validated as a reader. Mrs. H's perceptive response to the important "P.S." in this letter facilitated Teresa's ownership for her own literacy.

P.S. This book is one of my favorites. It was full of shockers and details. I don't know what you want to hear about the book since you never read it (Portfolio, Reading Letter, October 23, 1991).

Dear Teresa,

Sounds like I need to read this one. Don't you love it when you can't wait to find time to read! Some books are like that. Let's find you other books by this author. I'd also like for you to share this book with the class. Will you?

Mrs. H. (Portfolio, Reading Letter Response, October 23, 1991)

Facilitating student growth was a delicate balance between recognizing which students needed to be encouraged while still maintaining respect for the student's freedom to choose. Students who were very different in their abilities, were very similar in their need to be led to grow without intimidation. For a student like Matt, this class facilitated growth in his critical thinking abilities without his grammatical difficulties becoming an insurmountable roadblock.

Letters of response tell the teachers what I know about my book. It helps me to analyze the book I am reading when I write about it weekly. The mini-lessons are also helpful in that they teach us how to recognize the theme and setting and characterization, etc. It is easier to apply small kernels of reading lessons than getting it all at once and being expected to know it and use it (Interview, April 30, 1992).

Matt was a hard worker, very motivated. He had severe spelling problems.

Mrs. H: A program like this effects critical thinking. It also helps students learn individual skills, but it doesn't effect spelling growth except in the use of the dictionary (Final interview, August 21, 1992).

Matt learned to use a dictionary. He did not concern himself with correctness while he was writing. He separated the process of writing from the mechanics of spelling. Matt used his reading effectively in his writing. He developed writing style and skills from the books that he read. One could see this in his responses; he had exceptionally high level of thinking in his reading letters.

Mr. S: Matt's self-esteem went way up as he conferenced with us. He felt good that we cared about what he thought.

Before, his lack of grammatical skills had gotten in the way of his communicating (Final interview, September 10, 1992).

Some students required more persistent efforts on their teachers' part to move them forward both in their choices of literature and in their growth as readers and writers. One of these students was Jennifer who needed constant support. Jennifer worried both teachers all year. They would try to nudge her to move up, but it was hard. She was flighty and unorganized.

Jennifer made progress in her reading and writing even though she was very average in her ability, because she kept setting new goals that she would ultimately meet. Both teachers worked with her to set reasonable goals because they knew she needed a lot of support. For example, if she had read nothing but Judy Bloom, Mrs. H. would suggest another author that would be a little more difficult like Cynthia Boyd, a step up from her current reading material. To challenge her writing, Mr. S. would have a goal as simple as idea writing instead of personal narrative. In addition to nudging, both teachers constantly needed to help her to understand what something meant.

Mrs. H: Even though we had a philosophy of allowing students the freedom to choose, in Jennifer's case I had to be a firmer facilitator. I wasn't saying that you had to do this way, but I was pulling her along to change as much as possible (Final interview, August 21, 1992).

Artful questioning supported Jennifer's ability to predict possible outcomes, to

make critical relationships among characters, and to recognize her personal knowledge of motives.

Dear Mrs. H. and Mr. S:

Hey! So far the book, *Wolf Rider*, is pretty interesting. The thing that I cannot like about this book is that they (Andy and his dad) are always yelling at each other.

I think that Andy has a lot of guts to go to Dr. Lucas' class just to see if his voice matches Zeke's. When Andy told his dad that he got really mad. Every scene then they have been yelling all the time and it is getting boring.

Jennifer (Portfolio, Reading Letter, October 25, 1991)

Dear Jennifer,

Andy and his father are having a bad time, but I think Avi is trying to make a point about father/son relationships. Do you know what I mean? Think about it. Andy's dad is trying to get over his wife's death. He doesn't have any problems; he has a new girlfriend.

And suddenly Andy claims to have overheard a man claim to kill someone ... See what I mean:  
Let me hear from you tomorrow!

Mrs. H. (Portfolio, Reading Letter Response, October 25, 1991)

Steve was a highly gifted student. He would only put effort into something that interested him. One of those interests was science fiction. He decided to turn a short story into a science fiction book because of this class. He would write pages and pages of science fiction. He would come in before class and show Mrs. H. and Mr. S. things he had written. He was very involved in his writing projects. He would get very disturbed if they did not get things right back to him.

Mrs. H: I was worried about his reading at first because I wasn't sure if he had read the books or seen the movies. He read *Journey To the Center of the Earth* and referred to both the book and the movie (Final interview, August 21, 1992).

Dear Teachers,

In my book, *Journey To the Center of the Earth*, three people are thirty miles into the earth. One of them got lost, then they found him four days later. I like my book because it still makes me feel excited when I read it. This gets me into an adventurous mood so I can write easier. I like the book better than the movie; the movie skips important details that are in the book. I like how the author puts all the important details in. I don't like it when they say they are twenty leagues (which equals 40 miles) then the next day they say it means 30 miles. What confuses me is how he got lost ahead of his companions. They passed him; then he was lost.

Sincerely,

Steve (Portfolio, Reading Letter, October 13, 1991)

Dear Steve,

I am glad that your book "puts you in the mood" for writing. It's perfectly OK - even good - to borrow writing styles and techniques from other authors. I look forward to reading draft 2 (Mrs. H, Portfolio, Reading Letter Response, October 13, 1991).

Some students needed to be led to choose more appropriate literature. The reading letters provided the perfect opportunity for such reflection without censorship.

Dear Mrs. H and Mr. S:

Hi! How's it going? I'm reading the book, *American Psycho*, still. I am glad that I'm almost through with this book because of how disgusting it is.

The only reason I can think of him wanting to kill people all of the time is because he studied mass murderers like himself. He read books about people like Jack the Ripper and many others. He enjoyed



reading about them and the way they killed people. I think he got many of his ideas from these people. His friends would always tease him about this craze over these people but he didn't care.

There hasn't been any detective asking him questions about the disappearance of Paul Owen anymore. I still think that this detective will eventually catch Patrick. I think the detective will get enough evidence from Paul Owen's house from all the people he has killed there. That is the only way I know he will get caught, if he ever does.

Sincerely,

Everett (Portfolio, Reading Letter, December 12, 1991)

Dear Everett,

I'm delighted that you are disgusted with the book. I'm curious; you say that Patrick had a fascination with killers. Do you think that people who have such an interest -- people who love to watch slasher films, for instance -- have the potential to become violent themselves? (An idea to explore in writing workshop).

Mrs. H. (Portfolio, Reading Letter Response, December 12, 1991)

For some students, reading letters provided the opportunity to conference about personal writing. The letter allowed the teacher to facilitate student development through the validation of authentic literacy acts.

Dear Mrs. H,

I appreciate you taking the time to read my pieces although you told me nothing that I didn't already know. I wanted to know your feelings about my writing not for you to tell me general stuff that I already knew. Therefore, I did not get the desired result. I appreciate the constructive criticism although I asked for the feelings that my writing projected in you. Thank you anyway. I am still grateful for the use of your time.

Trina (Portfolio, Reading Letter, May, 1992)

Dear Trina,

I am sorry that I didn't respond in the way that you wanted. So, you want to know my reactions as a reader who is not your teacher. Is that it? I'm willing to read your work again and to try for a different reaction.

Mrs. H. (Portfolio, Reading Letter Response, May, 1992)

Lasting change in a student develops because the person has been taught how to reflect upon individual actions, understandings, and intentions in learning. The primary responsibility of the teachers in this study was to set up conditions in the whole language classroom that facilitated student reflection about reading and writing. This was accomplished through the development of an environment where students assumed responsibility for their own literacy. Students were able to take risks, set reasonable literacy goals, critically evaluate literature, bring meaning to texts, and develop collaborative relationships with peers and their teachers. As students participated in authentic literacy acts, they investigated their growth as partners with teachers who facilitated a sense of self respect in each student as a learner.

#### Teacher as an Evolutionist

The facilitator role of the teachers became that of the evolutionist as the teachers became developmental psychologists who saw substantial change in each student's abilities. *Evolutionist* in the context of this whole language classroom meant one who disengages in order that a process can be free to unfold in its natural direction of change. The teachers supported the evolution of meaningful knowledge

based on student need. The curriculum in this class evolved with the teachers creating their whole language classroom from the personal and social experiences of their students. The flexible environment of the reading/writing workshop and performance assessment supported students as they developed tools to direct their own learning.

For students like Steve, the social interaction of this class was a major contributor to his gains in literacy development:

My writing has improved by being able to get a reader involved with my story. I am able to take on the personality of one of the characters in my story and lead the reader through the action. I am never sure how the stories are going to end. The characters determine the end on their own. I have learned that you not only need to know your subject to write; you need to know your audience very well (Interview, May 4, 1992).

Douglas was able to learn skills in a more strategic fashion from the context of his own literacy needs in this class. He had studied grammar in a very traditional way during all of his time in school. He could not recall using any of the information that he had learned in previous classes after taking the test on the material. The only writing assignment that he had been assigned the previous year was a book report over a class novel. The ninth grade was essentially a repeat of middle school for Douglas. The tenth-grade reading/writing class was the first English class in which he learned information that was immediately related in an individual fashion to what he was actually reading and writing.

This was the first year that I studied one skill at a time. The mini-lesson helped me to stick with one thing until I know it instead of trying to learn

entire chapters at a time that cover a lot of skills. It is easier to pick up the details of grammar this way to use these skills while I write (Interview, April 28, 1992).

A goal of this whole language classroom was to cultivate self-determined readers and writers who were the creators of their own learning. Students like Jason learned for a variety of reasons but the internal motivation to learn that occurred when the students were assessed in accordance with individual growth could not be replicated in a class with predetermined benchmarks that were tied to standardized criteria.

We aren't tested over whether or not we can spell specific words; but our teachers know whether or not we have learned something from the improvement in our writing. For example when I first started writing, it looked like a sixth grader. Now, I actually write more like a ninth grader. Before I hated taking spelling tests. They were going to test me for L.D. This year I have time to go back to change mistakes (Interview, April 28, 1992).

When students like Teresa were free to choose their own reading and writing material, they became engaged in constructing their own knowledge.

My reading has improved since September through the things that I have learned in this class. I read more quickly and with a lot more understanding. I have begun to read a lot for pleasure. I pretty much stuck with one author -- Stephen King. I like his mysteries. I have read other authors and different categories of books to help me become a more complete reader, but my favorite is still Stephen King. My skills as a writer have improved. I still have problems with choosing a title for my pieces. I usually don't title what I write. I like to write personal narratives and tend to be very wordy -- that is something that I need to work on -- broadening my topics and getting to the point more quickly. I have learned a lot from both the teachers and my peers in this class. Sometimes, I will think a piece is bad, but others will think it is good. It is difficult for me to judge my own piece. I have improved as a writer

because this class has allowed me to write. I think to learn English, you have to practice using it. That is what you do in this class -- practice using real English which can't be learned in workbooks. I don't think that I would have discovered an interest in writing if it hadn't been for this class. This is a true English class where I get to read real books and to develop my ability to write. I will continue to read and to write and someday I may be satisfied with my work. Right now, I am happy to have learned how to do it (Interview, February 21, 1992).

Students like Robert recognized the value of reading and writing, and he developed his own potential by having the opportunity to write and the access to multiple sources of reading.

I really don't consider myself a good writer, but I do consider myself a writer. When writing for me, I escape. I get all my thoughts onto the paper. This class has helped me a lot for the simple fact that it gave me an excuse to write and as I adapted to this excuse, now I just write for a hobby.

What I have learned is more about form and punctuation. And it helps me a lot. And I am somewhat grateful for having been placed in this class -- and that wasn't a kiss-up either.

I have enjoyed being able to write whatever I want. My best piece is "A Man In this Stress." I love that piece because it gets so in depth. It feels like me in a way but yet he's living somewhere else and doing different things. I really don't have a worst piece because I like them all.

Time is of an essence when it comes to my reading. I love to read but basically don't have the time or I just don't feel like it when I need to be reading. Some of my favorite authors are William Burroughs, Olive Burkner and myself. I like to read books about different events. They could be peaceful or horrifying, but I'll read them. My reading habits have changed because of this class. I read more often than I ever have. This class opened the door to a vast assortment of different books. -- Thank you (Journal Entry, Portfolio, June 1, 1992).

Joe explained how assessment in the whole language class was a routine

activity which provided him with constant, strategic monitoring of his progress while reading and writing.

I would like to take a class like this next year. I don't want to go back to the old way of studying grammar. The assessments in this class provide you with a process of thinking critically. You learn what is important and what isn't. I think this is the way to learn effectively (Interview, April 27, 1992).

Everett was able to develop metacognitive skills as he responded to literature in a critical manner. He used these skills to improve his performance in other subjects.

This was the first year that I could read anything I was interested in. I was not able to take assigned novels home last year and I was expected to read to pass daily quizzes. In this class I read to learn about writing style, form and how I think in regards to what I am reading. I have become a more effective reader. I can read faster and with greater understanding. I can also visualize what I am reading. I have found this to be true not only in novels like the *Gunslinger*, but also in subjects like history. This is new for me. When I take tests in classes like chemistry or history, I can actually visualize the concept and apply it on tests (Interview, February 24, 1992).

Matt also addressed the intertwining of assessment and learning that promotes the student in the construction of meaning.

The only tests we have had in this class were called quests that we had in *Julius Caesar*. Mr. S. called his tests a quest because they were a mind adventure. Your mind is on an adventure to discover the truth. There is no right or wrong on these tests like on true and false tests. There is a possibility, if you bring knowledge to the quest, that you can convince the teacher of your opinion. On this type of test, your mind brainstorms about the topic and you let the teacher know everything that you know. On a regular test, there is only one right answer so it is just a matter of recall. You just concentrate on one answer that has been memorized. In a quest, you don't memorize facts -- you think about the subject (Interview, March 24, 1992).

The constructive, interactive process of the reading/writing workshop supported Kandis in her reading, writing, speaking, and thinking.

I just moved to this high school in the fall from a much larger school in another county. I used the differences in the two environments to write my first piece. Having always been in a city environment, the rural setting was quite an adjustment. This was the first time that I have ever had a class with not only two teachers but with a format that allowed me to actually talk with my teachers about my reading and writing. All of my previous English classes were designed in a routine fashion with textbooks, lectures, and tests. These classes didn't deviate from the year's schedule. All of the assignments were based on the grammar book's suggestions. This class was the first opportunity that I have ever had to actually learn to write. The fact that the teacher didn't assign topics on which to write put me in the position of having to think about my writing in an entirely different way -- I was challenged for the first time. In my former classes, the structure didn't put me in a position to have to think

(Interview, March 23, 1992).

A culminating activity provided each student with the opportunity to demonstrate what had been learned during the semester. Acquired knowledge could be integrated, extended, refined, and used to complete a meaningful task. Mr. S., Mrs. H., and Mrs. S. met to address the issues involved in performance-based assessment. The goal of this meeting was to outline the necessary elements in a performance assessment that would authentically assess the literacy levels of the students in the reading/writing workshop class. They agreed that the assessment tool must grow out of the student's daily instructional experience. The assessment that was created to be used with these student was a reflection of the process of reading and writing. The following excerpts from that meeting reflected all of the teaching roles that constitute a whole language teacher: observer, facilitator, evolutionist, emancipator, and

reflector: (Transcription/analysis of Conference, March 6, 1992).

Mr. S. began the discussion as an observer, when he stated the purpose for this assessment:

Our concern in the development of this final assessment is to document the literacy development of these specific students; not to produce an evaluation that had such reliability that it could be reproduced for other classes.

Mrs. H. continued the discussion as an evolutionist when she responded:

To have a truly valid performance assessment, the individual teacher must go through the process of developing the instrument.

Both teachers slid into the role of emancipator when Mr. S. responded with:

We need to decide if we are going to measure individual growth or the ability of a student to meet a pre-determined standard.

And Mrs. H. countered with:

In this English block, the student should be evaluated by progress toward individual goals and demonstrated improvement.

Mrs. S. acted as an observer in this process of developing an assessment instrument when she said:

However, we also need some sort of measure by which we can compare students, get a feel for group strengths and weaknesses and establish expectations for age groups.

And then the reflection began:

Mrs. H: Therefore we agree that we have two purposes in giving the instrument: (a) To tell us whether the tenth-grade class, as a group, is able to read, write, speak, listen, and think on the level we expect a tenth grader should.



(b) To give us specific information regarding strengths and weaknesses, for the group and for individuals, so that instruction can begin at an appropriate level, beginning in September.

Mr. S: The difficult job is deciding what level of literacy we expect in a tenth grader.

Mrs. S: Should we divide the response form into two sections: one might measure understanding of basic elements like plot, setting, characters ... The second would measure the higher cognitive skills?

Mrs. H: As long as we cover all levels of thinking, I'm not sure the structure matters. I still feel uncomfortable with trying to define specific grade level objectives. I understand that we need to have some way of measuring and stating where a kid is in his literacy development. But I'd like the focus to say on what he or she can and can't do, not on whether he or she is below, on or above level.

Mrs. S: Do these objectives accurately reflect the purpose of the performance-based assessment as we see it: the students will read a fictional passage and a non-fictional passage on the 10th grade level, and will demonstrate understanding of the reading on a variety of levels?

Mr. S: Yes, students should be able to recall basic story elements -- characters, setting, conflict, events/plot, solution/resolution. They should also be able to infer, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, compare and contrast, and predict.

Mrs. S: The non-fiction selection that we choose should reflect a writer's attitude toward writing.

Mr. S: *The Shepherd's Daughter* is a good fictional selection.

Mrs. H. became an emancipator when she stated:

We have to determine if we are going to score responses by focusing on content or ideas by using a rubric or by simply

scoring the answers as accurate or inaccurate.

In his response, Mr. S. emerged as a facilitator when he said:

The writing sample should be administered over a two-day period. Day one, students will select a topic and write draft one. Day two, students will write draft two and edit. We will select a variety of topics that will demonstrate how much risk and challenge the student is willing to take.

Mrs. H. responded as an emancipator when she stated:

We will separately evaluate content and mechanics. We will use rubrics to evaluate both and will borrow from the literacy passport test and from the holistic scoring criteria. We will also develop a chart to document the thinking processes students display in their reading responses and writing samples.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. S.'s final statement reflected the teacher as both an observer, facilitator, and reflector. This final statement truly reflected the interdependence of the roles:

We should use this instrument as a pretest for all incoming ninth graders next year. The profile sheet and responses will provide a benchmark and we could document the student's progress over the next year. (See Appendix E)

One of the most difficult tasks that the whole language teachers in this English 10 class had was the development of an assessment instrument that would meet the requirement of the language arts department for a culminating evaluation of each student's reading and writing progress while still retaining its authenticity as a personal and social view of an individual student's language growth. It became apparent that the assessment was contextual and was dependent upon the student's

relationship as a speaker, listener, writer, and reader within this specific English 10 classroom. The curriculum had evolved from the intellectual, social, and emotional experiences of the students and teachers in this class; therefore, the instrument could not be standardized. The assessment instrument could not be separated from the curriculum and instruction that was a constructive, interactive process in this reading/writing workshop. The goal of the assessment had to be the continued encouragement of students to reflect upon their own reading and writing, to evaluate their growth, and to set new literacy goals. Through providing specific information on each student's knowledge, skills, thinking strategies, and attitudes, the teachers believed that they would be able to refocus their instruction so that each student could continue to grow in the development of critical literacy.

#### Teacher as an Emancipator

*Emancipator* in the context of this whole language class meant that the teachers freed the students to work in collaboration with their peers and parents as well as their teachers, to explore relationships; intellectual growth; various roles as readers, writers, speakers, and listeners and to begin their own evolution as lifelong learners. Teachers collaborated with parents and students to support each student in developing a healthy sense of self. Parents were intentionally made a partner in the performance-based assessment of the reading/writing workshop. They were introduced to the model during parent night at the school where the course syllabus was shared

and work in their child's portfolio could be examined. The teachers also called or wrote parents on a regular basis. It was very obvious that parents were freed to be part of the reciprocal partnership in the performance-based assessment of a reading/writing workshop. Parents and the home environment had both direct and indirect involvement in their student's success in this class.

Douglas' family of which he was one of nine or ten children expected that he would do well. He was a very interesting kid who had strong support from home.

Doug: I used to have my mom check my work. She is pretty good in English. My mom has noticed that my writing has improved this year (Interview, April 28, 1992).

He was self-challenged and went beyond the requirements of the class to succeed beyond the minimum. He responded well to the program. He was very shy, but would talk in conferences.

Mr. S: I think most of all he appreciated the time to read and write (Interview, September 10, 1992).

Mrs. H: He benefitted from this program because he improved so much. At the end of the year, he was so concerned about his pieces that he was typing them. He went to the public library to do his critical research (Interview, August 21, 1992).

When students like Jason had open relationships with their family, even problems like learning disabilities were not insurmountable. Jason felt free to overcome any inherited difficulties in this class because he was not being judged as a

defective person.

My mom and my sister are both dyslexic. I still reverse letters. When I read, I had to stop and put my finger on the letter and look at it carefully. My mom got better the more she read, and I have also (Interview, April 28, 1992).

But even if a student had talent, as in Keith's case, home problems could overshadow any desire that he had to succeed. Keith began the class as a responsive, excited student. He read numerous books and wanted to discuss them with both his teachers and his peers. He would lend his own books to others. Then one day something happened. He came into class a different person. He was hostile and surly to anyone who approached him. When he began causing a disturbance by throwing his books around, Mr. S. and Mrs. H. had to take him out of class. As soon as they went into the hall, Keith was in tears. He had a lot going on at home and it was too much for him to deal with.

He had a history of school failure, but he was succeeding in this class up to this point. From that day on he would tune in and out sporadically if something really interested him, but not to pass the class. It did not matter to him if he failed. Eventually, he dropped out saying that he would go to night school or get his GED.

Mr. S: I only disagreed with him once about his selection of a book to read -- it was entirely too violent. We never got a response from him about any book he read all year (Interview, September 10, 1992).

The only time Keith responded to a class assignment other than reading was to write an editorial to the school principal about the "no hat" policy instituted by the school administration. He did a survey of the students and faculty and researched the history of the policy. He spent much time and energy on that piece.

Some parents were afraid to let their student succeed. Sam fantasized about her accomplishments in Mexico at the American school. She struggled with depression and addictions. She needed constant feedback and support in order to complete any written assignments. Her first written assignment had big gaps in it.

Mrs. H: We had to stay on her daily. She had a lot of problems self-conferencing (Interview August 21, 1992).

Her parents, according to the counselors, hovered.

Mr. S: I had the most contact with her parents. They were very concerned about her lack of progress. She really was making progress in her writing, but they would get very concerned about any grade that they felt was too low (Interview, September 10, 1992).

Two students used personal narratives to work through serious family problems. An excerpt from a conference between Teresa and Mr. S. illustrates, not only the freedom that she felt in writing such a revealing essay, but also, the collaborative part that her mother played in the writing.

Teresa reads: (Taped observation, February 21, 1992)

### Deniable Disease

Hi, my name is Teresa and I'm the child of an alcoholic. Up till 1987, I lived on and off with my alcoholic father, on and off meaning, my parents often split up because of my father's disease. Yes, alcoholism is a disease. It is a disease that unleashes an uncontrollable craving for alcohol. Drinking has nothing to do with a person's morals and we have to realize that alcoholism is a disease that tends to make us blame the drinker for his condition. As much as we may wish, the alcoholic has absolutely no power over the craving for drinking. The alcoholics will always get more.

In my case, my father was always putting alcohol into a Diet Coke can and carrying it around. He was constantly going to bars and parties until he consciously decided that he could stop his behavior.

I understand that my dad didn't do it because he didn't care for me, nor did he do it to hurt me. Not remembering lots about him being there, I'm glad that today he is sober so I can get the chance to know him better.

My point is that alcoholism is a curable disease, and you can't always try to stop the alcoholics compulsion for alcohol. They usually deny that they have a problem, hence the name, "undeniable disease." Trying to admit it isn't going to make him or her magically stop. If you can't cope, talk to a counselor, or shrink, or even a trusted friend. Then take their suggestions.

Mr. S:        Okay, let me tell you, I agree with what your mom said about this piece -- it is fantastic! It is great and let me tell you why it is great. When we first talked about putting this piece together, we talked about a little introduction, a little background information, some symptoms of alcoholism, some possible cures, and then you would do your point of view as the child of an alcoholic. What you have done here is to incorporate the entire thing - the research, your background, everything into a running narrative as the child of an alcoholic. That is a stroke of brilliance on your part. That makes your piece much more readable and much more interesting. It almost makes it like a story. Do you know what I am saying? That is the best kind of research or informative article. If you look in *Rolling Stone* or *People Magazine*,

the best article, the most interesting articles are written like stories and yours does that. I like the way that you started this article - Hi, I am Teresa, and I am the child of an alcoholic. That is exactly like an AA Meeting. That was brilliant. It gets us right into the story. You are also very effluent - everything seems to flow well together. You move easily from one subject to the next and to the next. It gets blurred in a few spots, but generally, it goes very smoothly together. It isn't fake - it doesn't sound fake. I like your format and your introduction. Something you need to do is to cite your sources, where you are getting your information. Like "studies show" - let us know where you are getting your information. "Family support is good" - where did the information come from? Have you done research on this?

Teresa: It's from one book and some other sources.

Mr. S: You will have to find more sources than just one.

Teresa: I have three sources.

Mr. S: You must reference those sources - if it is personal, state personal. Also, cite dates - your father has been sober since when?

Teresa: 1988

Mr. S: My biggest concern with this piece is that you are not supplying us with documentation on the sources of your information and that is a crucial part of this assignment. What draft is this for you?

Teresa: First

Mr. S: Wonderful; do what I suggested and I will talk with you again.

Teresa: How do it use these references?

Mr. S: For example, you might say, in an article in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Dr. \_\_\_\_ said in the 1992 edition that alcoholism is .... When we get to the actual



research, you will formally document your references. I am very proud of you.

Trina was very bright -- a gifted writer. She thrived in a program like this because she was given so much time to write. She loved to have her teachers respond. She had a lot of emotional problems and would get very personal in her selection of writing topics. Trina was a good example of the relationship Mrs. H. and Mr. S. tried to develop with each student, keeping it of course on a professional basis.

Mr.S: She would try and try to get us more personally involved in her life. It was tough because she was so needy. Some pieces like the one about meeting her father for the first time were difficult to respond to without becoming too involved. We had to maintain a distance and it was hard (Interview, September 10, 1992).

The issue of control and trust were very important in supporting the development of a whole language classroom. Mr. S. was afraid of this model at first, because he could imagine a parent challenging the grade that he gave their child. Because both he and Mrs. H. ultimately had to give grades, they based those grades on anecdotal evidence -- what they as professionals saw that constituted individual student progress. It involved trust on the part of students, parents, the teachers and their administration for the teachers to use formative evaluation rather than summative. This method of assessment was vital for students to be free to concentrate on their literacy development rather than grades.

Mr. S: Teachers are professionals like doctors and lawyers -- you wouldn't second guess these professionals. Teachers know what they are doing; and therefore, need the freedom to do it. There is a lot of trust going on all of the time (Interview, June 11, 1992).

Mr. S. wasn't totally comfortable with grades being derived from student progress towards individual goals. Mrs. H. was confident from the beginning that a student would grow if they gave freedom to the student to choose.

Mrs. H: Freedom to choose to learn is very important -- you can't impose this on a student (Interview, June 11, 1992).

During the year, Mr. S. was pressured by the junior teachers to return to the original curriculum and structure and to teach *Julius Caesar*. The results were disappointing. Students failed and he recognized that everyone could not be required to learn in a prescribed manner. Even though the students were assigned *Caesar*, they were expected to continue to complete assignments from the reading/writing workshop. There was no time for conferences of any kind. Students were expected to be independent learners and were also expected to continue to read outside book and respond with the necessary letters.

Mr. S: This year when I taught *Julius Caesar* and gave a test, it caused a lot of problems. Even though I called the "test" a "quest," to try to change the feelings about it, I felt like I was lying standing up there calling something a euphemistic term to hide its real intent. I liked how it was done, because the student had a lot of options. They had the opportunity to tell me what they knew. They

were expected to continue to read their books in addition to Shakespeare. They had no opportunities for conferencing. In fact, the whole workshop approach ground to a halt at that point (Interview, June 11, 1992).

Mrs. H: Mr. C., the principal, gave us the freedom to depart from the curriculum. He really supported this concept. I was asked by a teacher how I was going to get around the county policy of being required to give nine grades per semester and I said we weren't giving grades. Mr. C. had no problems with this at all. We collected a lot of data on kids. Last year, his big push was performance assessment. He was requiring every teacher to give one performance-based assessment. We were giving all performance-based assessments (Interview, June 11, 1992).

Mr. S: The type of assessment that we are using takes a high level of trust on the part of the building administration. I also believe that a teacher in this case must document, document, document. What I have found helpful is the implementation of goals - setting goals with the students each nine weeks and determining together what is reasonable to expect the student to accomplish. At the end of the nine weeks, the student has either accomplished these goals or they haven't. That is so easy to assess. Have they turned in one piece of writing? You assign a grade depending on how many of the goals they achieved. The rubric that we developed -- the 4,3,2,1 -- is taken from the county holistic writing scale from the tenth-grade writing assessment. I condensed it to one page front and back. I read their piece and then highlight the part of the rubric that pertains to their piece and staple this to their piece when I hand it back. That way they can see the things they did and what is necessary for a 4 paper. The student sees how they can make the paper better by following the rubric guidelines. This provides more accountability but it still isn't numerical accountability like 88% on a quiz (Interview, June 11, 1992).

Because the teachers in this whole language class viewed themselves as

partners with parents, students, and the administrator in the development of literacy, trust flourished. Parents felt free to reflect about their own and their children's reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Families worked through issues of disability, abuse, enabling, and control. The principal, teachers, parents, and students collaborated to free students from the onus of short term grading as the primary benchmark for success. Students were given the freedom to develop their own literacy through time and respect for their individual development. Students were also given the freedom to choose to fail. The responsibility for growth in this class was the student's with teachers, parents, and peers constituting a supportive community.

#### Teacher as a Reflector

*Reflector* in this whole language class meant that the teachers observed and gathered data and then analyzed it in order to provide a mirror with which they and the students could carefully consider literacy growth. The teachers in this class continually reflected with each student about the literacy process and the new sense of self that was emerging. In the whole language classroom, learning is a constructive, interactive process with the teacher providing both explicit and implicit models for literacy. The mini-lessons in this class provided explicit models that demonstrated how to approach specific tasks like plot analysis. The implicit modeling occurred with the teacher reflecting with each student about the thinking process involved in approaching and completing a cognitive task. Insuring that the modeling practice takes place within an appropriate instructional context that supports the enhancement of

each student's self-concept took constant vigilance and sensitivity on the part of each teacher. It was this level of support that affected each student's perception of responsibility in his or her continuous performance-based assessment.

Matt was able to verbalize how the majority of students in this class felt about their responsibility in this type of assessment:

Because I read two days a week in this class, my reading has improved significantly. I now have confidence in my reading ability and that is reflected in other classes. I can read faster and comprehend more. I also read for pleasure every night at home which is new for me. Because I read all of the time now, my ability to write has also improved. I like to read country music magazines and books about nature like *The Call of the Wild*. I have also improved as a listener because of this class. I now listen to everything the teacher says and piece together what is important for me personally. I don't want to miss anything in conferences that might provide me with clues that will help me understand the book that I am reading or a piece that I am working on. Teachers praise you in conferences and that encourages me to try to revise my work. I don't just get a piece returned to me all torn apart with marks. They try to show me what is good about my piece and how to enhance that strength by correcting mistakes (Interview, April 30, 1992).

Respect for students' opinions was commented on by numerous students, like

Joe:

Last year, I was in enriched English. We all read the same thing -- *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. We took a test over this book -- ten question tests that had you explaining what happened. In this class we write reading letters telling what we think about what we are reading. I have never had an opportunity to tell anyone what I thought about what I was reading before. I don't think my former teachers cared what I thought. They just wanted to make sure I was reading the assigned work (Interview, April 27, 1992).

For students like Jason, self-concept determined whether they would succeed or fail in any academic environment. The design of the reading/writing class

facilitated success. Jason was afraid of being discovered as learning disabled. He was so capable verbally that he did not want other persons to know that he could not write as well as he could speak. His problems with spelling kept him from achieving up to his ability. He volunteered to be in this pilot study, because he refused to be in a special class for students with problems with reading and writing.

Mrs. H: He kept asking if this were a regular English class. So I knew that he was perfect. If he had been in my reading class, he would have refused to work because everyone would know he had a problem. I felt like Jason was pleased that we truly respected him and this model reinforced that belief (Interview, August 21, 1992).

Mr. S: His abstract reasoning was shockingly good. I couldn't believe the answers that he would come up with. He was so capable, but couldn't demonstrate that capability easily in his written work. He was totally disorganized. He couldn't keep up with a thing. Special education was not the answer for Jason, because of his self-image (Interview, September 10, 1992).

Integral to the development of this whole language environment was the teacher's reflection upon her or his own literacy development. Both teachers understood that the learner was always trying to make sense of his or her environment. They described learning as actively constructing meaning through bringing personal and social knowledge together. The job of the teacher according to Mrs. H. and Mr. S., was to mediate student learning. But in order to be successful as mediators, they had to understand how they developed into whole language teachers.

Mrs. H. explained that she grew into a whole language teacher not only

because of her teaching experience, but also because of her experiences in college and high school. She loved to write, but she was very frustrated by the lack of time for writing, the lack of response to writing, and the grades that never seemed to make sense. In college, she was told that teaching grammar did not necessarily correlate with producing better writers, but no one offered an alternative. When she first started teaching, she played at what she believed was a different way to teach English -- whole novels and journal writing.

Sometimes, I would feel insecure and would feel like I had to go back to the basal or workbook. I never felt confident with what I was doing. Mr. S. said the same thing to me about his first year of teaching -- the worksheets and spelling tests just didn't feel comfortable. Something wasn't right. When I read about the reading/writing workshop model, it was complimentary to the psycholinguistic approach to teaching reading that I had studied in graduate school (Interview, November 12, 1991).

Mr. S's biggest frustration as a teacher was student boredom. He could see students' eyes glaze over. He felt very sorry for all of his students, because he remembered how he had felt about being bored in school. He tried to find something that was different from the usual lesson plans that just delivered information. He had never been comfortable with the testing and grading components of teaching.

Mr. S: Before, I had kids read and respond to literature by writing and role playing, and then I would give quizzes and tests to determine levels of knowledge and grades. I tried to use the synthesis level of *Bloom's Taxonomy* but in actuality I was using recall and knowledge questions. What we are using now is total synthesis. In college, whole language was talked about but not as an integrated

approach. There was no philosophy that bound any of my training together. There was nothing unifying. The workshop provides a gestalt -- a holistic view of literacy (Interview, September 10, 1992).

The reciprocal relationship between student and teacher affected instructional roles. When both teachers and students viewed their partnership as vital, students were more successful in assuming responsibility for their literacy growth.

Jason's ability to talk with his teachers about his writing was new. He had always had trouble in traditional English classes. He was not successful with the traditional methods of teaching grammar and spelling. He only tried to accomplish classwork if he liked the teacher. He had never passed a spelling test and had read only one book. In this class, he not only liked the teachers; he trusted them. He therefore entered into the process of gaining literacy skills for the first time.

Mr. S. has helped me out a lot. He and Mrs. H. have different conferences with students. One is a correct form conference when they discuss things like paragraph form, etc. I keep a log on what I am told. Other conferences are when I read my story and Mr. S. tells me his impressions. He gives me ideas about what might happen next. When I log different skills that Mr. S. tells me need to be corrected I try to practice what I learn. I have a hard time with spelling. I have never passed a spelling test in my life. I am using bigger words now, so I have to use people to look over my writing to help me edit and I use the dictionary a lot. I conference with my peers, teachers and parents (Interview, April 28, 1992).

Doug had never had a chance to conference with a teacher in any other class. It was easier to learn when he was able to talk to a teacher rather than just learning from a lecture, because it was not general information. It was specific information for



his needs. He knew what he needed to work on. Because of this class, he had started to write more. He had also been able to use skills from this class in Spanish. He could correct his grammatical structure because of what he had learned even though English is different from Spanish.

Because of Joe's involvement with *Caesar* in Mr. S.'s class, he began to look for more plays by Shakespeare and found *Hamlet*. It took a long time to read because it was more difficult by himself -- he had to read each page three times. But because of the relationship with Mr. S., Joe felt supported in tackling such a challenging task independently.

Everett improved as a writer by being able to edit more effectively. He did not repeat the same mistakes, because of his conferences with his teachers. He also recognized that he did not need as much support as he had in previous classes to get assignments completed.

Kandis also liked the fact that she was able to conference with both of her teachers about her reading. She said it helped to make her reading more interesting.

For example, Mr. S. was able to help me relate the changes that the vampire in Rice's book goes through to the changes confronting students in a high school. Peer pressure, for example, puts you in situations where you change and do things you wouldn't otherwise choose to do. The struggle between good and evil is a constant theme in life (Interview, March 23, 1992).

Both Mr. S. and Mrs. H. reflected that it was imperative for successful growth that the student view the teacher as a facilitator for learning.

Mr. S: Basically, the teacher is giving up control in this type of model; the kids are working on their own. They are talking -- some kids are over here conferencing, others are reading, some are writing quietly to themselves. Some kids are cutting and pasting and bugging the teacher for scissors and paste. Kids will come up to other students and say, " Would you like to hear this piece?" The teacher puts the learning into the hands of the student. If the teacher is big into student empowerment, it works, because students are eventually going to have to function on their own (Interview, September 10, 1992).

Each teacher reflected individually upon how his or her support for the student was exemplified. Upon reflection, each concluded that they needed to proceed in the following manner:

Mr. S: I am pleased with the development of this class. It gets more and more accountable. It has developed so that the grading accountability has become easier. I am now setting standards. I know what to say yes and no to in terms of when students will turn in work. I now require that they sign up for conferences. I won't have an editing conference without prior scheduling. That prevents the rush at the end of the 9 weeks. You are immobilized at the end because you want all of the students to succeed but the problem is that a lot of them put it off until the last minute and then try to scramble. This way I can look at that kid dead in the eye and say - "You knew what the rule was" (Interview, November 18, 1991).

Mrs. H: Conferencing is the key to developing ownership in the students. The teachers must try to see every student each day. It is important to go to the student and to sit beside them. Eye contact is important. Use only open-ended questions. Refuse to read first drafts of any work. Don't look at drafts; look at students and listen hard. Tell the

student what you hear. Resist judgements. Praise by describing your reaction to specific parts of the piece. Ask questions about things you don't understand or want to know more about. Ask the writer what he/she will do next. Offer options. Keep conferences short -- no more than two minutes (Interview, November 12, 1991).

In order for curriculum, instruction, and assessment to be intertwined in the whole language class, each component has to be a reflection of the other. The processes of reading, writing, listening, and speaking are complex. Continuous self and collaborative reflection by the teachers and students is required to know how individual learning is progressing, which learning strategies are working, and what critical thinking skills are needed for survival in a society with innumerable choices, complex problems, and an ever changing knowledge base.

### Discussion of Teacher Roles

The way that both teachers and students view their respective roles in the whole language environment of the reading/writing workshop classroom affects whether or not each student will be successful in developing literacy. A teacher must be an intuitive observer of each student's development as a speaker, listener, reader, and writer through continual authentic assessment. The teacher must use the assessment to facilitate the student's evolution of new concepts and to free the student to become more reflective about his or her literacy. The teaching roles of observer, facilitator, evolutionist, emancipator, and reflector emerged from an analysis of my observations, interviews, and physical traces like letters, reflective journals,

portfolios, a status of the class log, and a learning log of student conferences.

Table 3 reflects the relationship that the teacher roles had with the implementation of both the reading/writing workshop curriculum and the performance-based assessment models as identified by the teachers and the students. The code indicates the source of the quote by student letter and number and by whether the unit of data is from an interview, physical trace, or observation. These units of data are classified as either effective (+), ineffective (-), or mixed in its effect (+/-) in relationship to the development of student literacy as the quotes exemplify a teacher role.

Table 3

Effects Matrix: Influence of Teacher's Role  
on the Implementation of the Innovation.

Role	Student assessment	Examples	Teacher assessment	Examples
Observer	+	1. J4-I: I don't think my former teachers cared what I thought.	+	1. Ms. H P-1: Assessment is ongoing.
	+	2. T1 - P: Reading letters allow you to ask questions.	+	2. Mr. S-I: We had interrater reliability.
Facilitator	+	1. J1-I: In this class, I not only like the teachers; I trust them.	+	1. Ms. H-I: Conferencing is the key to develop ownership in students.
	+	2. E2-I: I don't need as much support as I needed to get things done.	+/-	2. Mr.S-I2: I now require that they sign up for conferences.
Evolver	+	1. J1-I: We aren't tested over whether or not we can spell specific words; but our teachers know whether or not we have learned something from the improvement in our writing.	+	1. Ms. H-I: During editing conferences, skills are taught within the contest of the student's writing.
	+	2. T2-I: I think to learn English, you have to practice using it.	+	2. Mrs. S-I: The workshop approach to teaching the literacy is student centered-- goals and expectations are written for each student.
Emancipator	+	1. T1-I: These teachers give you time to read and to write in class.	+/-	1. Ms. H-OJ3: Even though we had a philosophy of allowing students the freedom to choose, in J3 case, I had to be a firm facilitator.
	+	2. M2-I: It is easier to apply small kernels of reading lessons than getting it all at once and being expected to know it.	+	2. Ms. H I: Freedom to choose to learn is important--you can't impose this on a student
Reflector	+	1. K1-I: I like the fact that I have been able to conference with both teachers.	+	1. Ms. H-I: Use only open-ended questions.
	+	2. J4-I: Mr. S makes everything easier to understand.	+	2. Mr. S-OJ1: His abstract reasoning was shockingly good.

Note: effective = + mixed effective = +/- ineffective = - I = interview O = observation P = portfolio

### Changing Student Roles (Constructivism in the Classroom)

The researcher continued the case study of literacy development in a tenth-grade language arts class through the exploration of how an active learning environment was created in this whole language classroom. Students were given opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of language through their application of knowledge; by reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills; and to develop critical thinking skills in a variety of contexts. The teacher continually assessed the learning state of each student, determined appropriate procedural skills and learning strategies, and supported the self-regulatory actions of the learner to motivate the student to become invested in his or her own literacy development.

#### Intuitive Use of Skills

Many students mentioned that they were able to transfer skills that they had learned in this class to other academic areas. Students revealed that they had been able to learn and use skills from this class in a totally different way both because of the structure of the class and because of the way in which they were assessed through authentic reading and writing performances. The assessment process allowed the students to internalize the information that they had learned in an organized manner to enable them to use the knowledge strategically. This knowing occurred without the use of rational processes; immediate cognition, hence intuitive.

An example of this was Teresa's comment:

My reading and writing in other classes at Stonewall has been affected by this class. I can organize information more easily. I can now read faster from the skills that I have learned in this class. For example, in earth science, I can read the chapters more effectively, because I have learned that you don't read every word. I am able to use this technique in other classes (Interview, March 18, 1992).

Another example was Joe's statement:

I have more freedom to write what I want in this class. I am not tied down to a certain subject or type. It frees me to develop my own style. Like certain writers develop their own style like horror. This class helps me do this. This class also helps me write in other classes. I can now brainstorm and organize my thoughts more easily. Because of this class, I am also able to listen more critically. I am more analytical, especially in geometry. I will only pick out specific words to take notes now. It happened because of this class and my learning to write better. Notes in geometry are meaningful to me because I can determine what is important and now I can pick out key ideas and words that illustrate what I need to know (Interview, April 27, 1992).

The final example was Everett's remark:

I have been able to develop strengths as a learner in this class by being able to focus on what is most important when I am listening, reading, and writing. I can tell that this has affected me in my other classes. I learn more quickly than I did especially when it involves reading. I can also concentrate better. I have become a better speaker through developing a stronger vocabulary through reading a lot (Interview, February 24, 1992).

This whole language class created a context that organized student's literacy skills. Students were able to maintain connections between the skills and knowledge learned through reading, writing, speaking, and listening in the reading/writing workshop and everyday learning experiences. Because this class provided a sense of individual purpose, unity, relevance and pertinence, students were able to integrate

the educational experiences of this class into their individual scheme of meaning.

### Academic Experiences

A lack of previous academic experience did not negatively affect student growth in a performance-based assessment, because students were not compared with each other. Each student was supported in developing skills and strategies for his or her own individual improvement as a reader, writer, speaker, and listener.

One of these students was Michael. The following is an explanation of his background and examples from his portfolio.

### Reading and Writing

Michael was the most severely academically deprived student in the class. He came to this school late in the year. He was from Tennessee and had been kept at home by his father who never sent any of his children to school on a regular basis. Michael's education was very fragmented. He had no credit towards graduation. To be able to gain a clear picture of this student and of how this type of a class design affected him, one needs to hear his voice and his teachers' voices as they reflect his literacy growth:

Most Effective Writing (Portfolio Assessment/June, 1992)  
Untitled



Though I have never met you  
I know you well.

We have shared our thoughts  
Our dreams our desires on the phone  
At night for hours.

I'll bet if I saw you  
This very day, I'd know you  
In a minute, but what  
Would I say?

Though were so close were  
So far apart, but not to far for your  
Love to reach my heart.

### Left In the Cold

One cold winter day, me and a bunch of my friends were playing football. The temperature had to be at least 32 degrees. One of my friends suggested we go camping that night. He said he ment it no matter how cold it gets. As everybody was leaving to go home I said wait I know a perfect place to go at the park. They said yea sure and we will go and laughed.

About three o'clock I got this phone call. It was Doug. He asked me if I was going to help him get everything together for the trip. I said sure. Let me call everyone else, O.K. I guess it was around 4:30 now. If we were going we would have to hurry up before it gets dark. After I called everyone it was about 5:15 We packed up all of our stuff. Now we are on our way.

As we were walking down the trail we saw this man, but at the same time we did not think nothing of it. We finally found a place to camp across the creek.

We were unloading our packs and we here someone talking. We were nervous at first. My friend Doug got some firewood for us. While me and David pitched the tent. By now it is 7:30 and we got our fire started.

We all decided to have something to drink and sit down by the fire and

talk for a while. David fell asleep round 9:30. My friend Doug and I went for a walk. When we got back the tent, sleeping bags and the backpacks were all packed. We did not understand. Dave said that someone came running back here saying, "I am going to get you."

We were all kind of skurd at first. But there was nothing we could do. We had to stay out there because our parents told us we were crazy for wanting to go and if we went we had to stay because they were locking the doors.

So we sat the tent back up and unpacked all of the bags. We were all getting hungry since it was 5:00 the last time we ate. It was now 11:00. So we made some hotdogs over the fire. After we got through eating we played a radio. I guess that man was just trying to scare us because nothing happened.

Reading

Number of Books Read - 2

Best Liked Book

Wolf Rider by Avi

Reading Letter

2-21-92

Dear Mrs. H,

So far this book is a little bit confusing. Right now I just finished the part where the cop came to the school to find out what happened because Nina told the police that Andy was messing with her. Andy's dad told him to forget about the hole thing. He said that he would try. The next day him and his dad went for a bike ride. Andy thought he saw Nina and he went to warn her but him and his dad were having a good time and did not want to mess it up. So far I like this book.

Mike

Dear Mike,

*Wolf Rider* is a confusing book. But I think Avi wants you to be confused. So what do you think is going on? I think if I were Andy, I'd just forget the whole thing. After all, Nina's alive, so maybe Zeke was just making a prank call. That is what the police think. And I don't blame Nina for telling Andy to get lost. What do you think? Write again soon! Mrs. H.

### Self-Evaluation (Interview, March 24, 1992)

For someone to be a good writer, they have to finish school. I don't think that I have improved that much at writing because I don't write a lot. I have learned things like when to separate paragraphs. My best piece is "Left In the Cold," because it is the first piece that I have ever written. My worst piece is the piece I wrote on insanity because I did not get enough information and I didn't spend enough time on it.

I have become a better reader. I finished two books. I like books that have suspense. I really like mysteries. I don't read a lot. These are the first books I have ever read.

### Teacher Reflections

Mrs. H: He came in late in the year. He had a lot of family problems. He was waiting to get into a special alternative school that provided him with a work study program. It was some bizarre arrangement where we had to give him "F's" so he could get into the program. He had a contract with his guidance counselor that if he performed up to his capabilities, he could get into the program. Surprisingly he was very motivated (Interview, August 21, 1992).

Mr. S: When he first entered the program, his writing was much better than I expected knowing that he had problems. He had problems definitely, but he improved. He had serious grammatical problems, but he wouldn't give up -- he would write. He would work hard at editing conferences. He would listen and then I would see him

using the information that he had learned. He was not as motivated to read (Interview, September 10, 1992).

Michael was able to make progress in this class because he was not judged as deficient and made to recover from a preconceived gap in skills. Michael was supported in learning about his literacy needs and in setting attainable goals while he was in this classroom and school. A vital reflection by Michael was that he needed to finish school. The critical assessment by both Michael and Mrs. H. and Mr. S. which led to this reflection was that he had grown in his ability to read, write, listen, and speak.

### Classroom Structure

The student with an attention deficit disorder was provided with an opportunity to succeed in a performance-based assessment that is a integral part of the reading/writing workshop. Impulsiveness was controlled through the development of a structure that consistently forecasted to the student what each step in the reading/writing process entailed. The student was supported in developing an individual plan for acquiring the skills that were necessary for continued literacy development through immediate feedback during conferences with the teacher.

Students like Jason and Nathan were able to sustain interest long enough to succeed because of the continuous feedback that they received from teachers. The design of the reading/writing workshop builds in daily success that supported these

students in taking the risk to attempt the next step in the reading or writing process. The structure also included time for reflectivity which is new for most impulsive students. They no longer were under the pressure to produce a finished product before the bell rang. The lack of pressure lessened their attention deficit and supported the development of metacognition which is a behavioral strategy that is necessary for these students to be successful as lifelong learners. One example of a structural technique was the keeping of a daily class log.

### Class Logs

Each student gave a status report daily to better focus conferences. Mrs. H. kept her status of class notes in a daily journal. This journal was a reflection of all of her classes during the day. It provided her with a running record of students, lessons, events, and collaborative efforts with other staff members. She could use this record to help plan mini-lesson topics with Mr. S. that emerged as a general need for the majority of class members. Mr. S. kept his status of class notes in a grade book to incorporate as part of the assessment of students during the quarter.

Mr. S: I have learned that I must be very direct about asking about student progress -- what draft are you on; what page are you on in your book. And that I must document carefully. There is not a day that goes by that I do not do a status of class (Interview, November 18, 1991).

Mrs. H: The status of class is taken at the beginning of each class. It not only allows the teacher to determine where

each student is in the accomplishment of individual goals; it also, is a reflection of what reading and writing conferences goals should be for that day (Interview, November 12, 1991).

Editing conference records further documented student efforts as well as provided students with information to help them develop individual goals in their reading and writing. Teachers conferenced about books and about pieces of writing that had first been self-edited and then edited by peers. The reading conferences were running records. The following excerpt is from Mrs. H's reading record for J.B. (Observation and Conference Notes, Teacher's Journal/Log).

Date

9/13 On p. 41 of *The Dark Half*. Good progress since yst.

9/21 On p. 51. Encouraged more rdg. at home. Aim for 10 pp. a day.

— missing one letter

9/26 On p. 85

10/11 - 2B *Dark Half*. Reading *Pet Semetary*, King. "Better than *Dark Half*, easier because it doesn't switch between places, less characters. Too much cussing, overly. Like a person who tries to be cool by cussing too much." Just started p. 51.

\* Goal: p. 80 by 10/17

10/18 *Pet Semetary* p. 70 - Did not make goal

\* Goal: p. 90 by 10/24

10/24 on p. 110. Likes the book.

11/8 on p. 138. Will try to read more at home. Discussed plot str. in relation to his book -- is on rising action.

1/31 absent

2/28 On p. 43 of *The Eyes of the Dragon*. Goal: p. 100 by 3/6. discussed J's not finishing books. Expressed by concern that he is still choosing King, although he's abandoned two books. Says he's committed to this one. Will finish by end of quarter.

3/19 On p. 102.

3/27 On p. 153 (3/4 way through)

4/2 p. 183 Good Recall

*Pet Sematary*. This is fairy tale. *Sematary* is more realistic.

Likes *Eyes* - like the "Fairy Tale" better. Flag tries to hurt people for his own gain. Stark tries to hurt people in *Dark Half*.

Prediction?

\* Goal - p. 250 by 4/9

4/9 *Cage the Animals*. Switched to meet req's.  
was on p. 201 of *Eyes*.

4/24 *Cage* P. 201 -- less than 100 pps. left

Really sad; emphathizes with character; likes it better than King novels.

\* Finish by 5/1

- 5/1 *Lottery Rose* p.11 (Just checking it out.)  
"Beginning is weak." Finished *Cage* -- Met Goal  
Will decide to keep or abandon by 5/7.
- 5/7 Beginning *Night* abandoned *Lottery Rose*) Goal - to p. 26 by tomorrow.
- 5/8 p. 27 - met goal by reading in class.
- 5/14 - absent
- 5/21 on p. 33. Not reading at home.
- 6/4 p. 82. Had to return book. READ ONE SELECTED BOOK

The writing/editing conference record for each student not only provided documentation of what they were working on but also taught each student individual skills. The rules governing self-editing were very specific (see Appendix F).

The following editing conference record for J.B. taken from Mr. S's journal/log illustrates the structure that supported students who would tend to lose focus easily without this high level of feedback with the teacher:



Table 4

## Editing for J.B. Conference Record

Title of piece & date (comments)	Skills used correctly	Skills taught
(migraine) 10/78/91  Untitled (helmet law)	Labeled, dated draft	Edited in 2nd col. Draft in parag. consistent tense. Indent 1 1/2". Print or slow down on cursive so it's legible.
3/17/92 Business letter needs a new draft 4/92	All business letter elements are present.	Don't join sent. with commas. In bus. let. state the facts and tell what you want. Avoid wordiness.
Critical analysis of	Responds to reviews	Don't underline author's name. Avoid long quotes. Paraphrase.
Attitude Problem (No conference - turned in example)		

J.B.'s interim grade was a "C" and his first nine week grade was an "A." He received an A in writing workshop and a "B" in reading workshop. His writing goals for the next quarter were to: (a) try fiction; (b) work on description; (c) work on pieces at home. His reading goals were to: (a) read at least one more King novel; (b) try to improve fluency; (c) to demonstrate thoughtful, critical responses to the book.

The reading report on J.B. filed on February 10, stated:

Mrs. H: J.B. has made poor progress during the second quarter. He performs better when he receives immediate response. He was unable to maintain his independent reading during *Caesar*. I feel that he will show improvement in the coming weeks. I'll let you know more about interim time.

Mrs. S: I believe that special education also monitors him - at least for this year!

By third quarter, J.B. had turned in no reading letters. He had been absent six times. He had submitted one writing piece for publication. His own evaluation did not correspond to the "D/F" his teachers gave him:

J.B: I believe that I have made excellent progress toward my writing goals and good progress toward my reading goals. I believe that my grade should be a "B." I think that I need to make time to read. In all I believe that this course is good (Self-evaluation, March, 1992).

Mr. S: I still struggle with what do I do with the raw data that I have on these students. How do I individualize instruction for each kid. Sometimes it takes two weeks to see a pattern that says -- hey, wait, this kid is in trouble. Particularly, if the guidance counselor comes to talk with me about a kid and I say: "Hey, whoa! I should have seen this coming." I kick myself because I knew the problem was there and I did nothing (Interview, February 21, 1992).

In J.B.'s case, the raw data told a story to Mr. S. and Mrs. H. as well as the reading lab teacher and the special education department. J.B. was monitored carefully and completed the class successfully.

### Structured Choice

Nathan also had a history of academic problems. His mother, an elementary school teacher, referred him for testing to try to determine what could be causing

these problems. Attention was his major problem. He would have to get up and walk around. It took a lot a patience to have him in class, because his wandering would bother others. He also offended some of the Hispanic students with racist remarks.

The researcher was not able to interview Nathan because a massive car accident left him with some serious injuries and he had to remain at home for the remainder of the year. She was able to observe him in class for a semester. He would have a lot of difficulty sitting in one seat and would frequently make audible and completely inappropriate comments. He would put his head on his desk and try to sit still during the mini-lesson and the status of class reports. His saving grace in this class was the fact that he was able to spend a majority of his time reading and writing what he chose to do. He had to be reminded to focus on the task at hand numerous times during class.

Nathan showed definite progress in both his reading and his writing. He had never read a book in his life. His writing also progressed because he started caring about his writing. He wanted immediate feedback from both teachers on his drafts. The structure of the reading/writing class and the performance assessment facilitated his success.

### Metacognition

The design of this whole language class supported the development of metacognition. It became apparent that an integral part of both whole language and

the performance-based assessment that was part of the reading/writing workshop design was the development of self-awareness in students. Students approached literature effectively as active readers. They began to self-monitor and to carry on an inner dialogue or metacognition as they read. They had gained some self-knowledge about their individual strengths and weaknesses and they were able to use task knowledge as they began to realize what they were doing and why they were doing it. According to McNeil (1990), this is the way ". . . effective readers approach text with an active mindset."

### Self-Monitoring

Many students were able to describe how the performance-based assessments in this class facilitated their understanding of how they learned. They were now consciously aware of the interrelationship between reading, writing, speaking, and listening and the products they produced in their whole language classroom.

Doug explained how he thought when writing fictional pieces:

This year I have been writing fiction. My ideas come from events in my life. Writing doesn't come easily. When I write my first draft, I put down my ideas as fast as they will come to me. I think about structure only to an extent. Sometime, when I get done writing a couple of sentences, I will self-edit to make sure it sounds good. After I have conferenced with a friend, I read my second draft to Mrs. H. and she checks the wording and punctuation and makes sure that I have done it right. I will write what she says on the edge of the paper, so that when I am rewriting it I remember what she has said. It is pretty helpful (Interview, April 28, 1992).

### Listening and Speaking

As a listener, Doug described being able to focus better without fidgeting so much. He was also able to take notes more effectively which was different for him. This was the first class in which he had to listen and write notes that were important for him to use. The class taught him to discriminate about what was important to put in notes. The class also helped him to talk more freely with peers about his reading and writing. He had never conferenced before with teachers. Now he was able to verbalize about his learning style. He had thought about how he learned and stated what teachers identify as a kinesthetic learner, someone who learns by doing.

Now instead of keeping to myself, I am able to talk to adults more. As a learner I learn through actually doing something. I can remember something better if I have actually done it. My hardest thing to do is to write about my book every week. It is easier for me to finish the book and then I have more things to write about regarding the rising and falling action and the climax. I have found from this class that I have more to write about than I thought -- more stories (Interview, April 28, 1992).

### Visualization of Connections

Jason also was able to articulate what he had discovered in this class about his thinking process during a performance assessment.

This year I learned grammar from the books that I read. I see how things are capitalized and how paragraphs are organized. Subconsciously, we don't know

it, but we are learning grammar. The writing I have done this year is totally different. I used to always write little short stories. This year I wrote two pieces -- two long stories. I got my first idea from the lyrics of a song that Mr. S. played for us. This piece seemed to flow without my having to think so carefully about form. As I write I visualize the entire story before I begin. I can picture all of the story at night like I am watching TV. I think about how I can make the story better before I go to bed -- about how the plot can turn and about how the reader would feel as they read it. I want the reader to be interested and I want to be interested in the story. You have the total idea of the story but you really don't know what is going to happen until you set your story in motion. The characters take on a life of their own (Interview, April 28, 1992).

### Critical Thinking

Joe was able to effectively explain how his thinking had changed because of this class.

My writing has gotten longer and more in depth. I have improved a lot by including more action and by using styles that are varied. I can now judge the difference between the style used in fiction and nonfiction. For example, I use stream-of-consciousness in fiction, but it doesn't seem right in nonfiction. I have gained an interest in reading from this class. My ability to understand what I am reading has improved tremendously because of my involvement with Shakespeare. It was like a foreign language. It was like when I took Spanish. I started to think in the language of the play. All the explanations were wordy. Eventually, I got into their way of speaking. When I am reading, I try to concentrate on the story. I like to think ahead and try to predict what is going to happen. In trying to understand that language, I have been able to look at things from a different point of view. To be able to understand *Hamlet*, I had to look for context clues to be able to understand what characters were thinking. I learned not to read word by word. I skimmed and read only the important words. I could also visualize what was happening. I could see different settings, etc. I could also experience the exciting parts like when Hamlet was fighting with Ophelia's brother. I could pick up the scene without having to read it word for word (Interview, April 27, 1992).

Because of the natural flow, freedom, and respect for individual achievement that occurred in this whole language environment, the classroom functioned as a community that prepared students to be literate citizens in a democracy. This process-oriented pedagogy was social and interactive thus supporting the student in learning to work collaboratively in groups and to communicate effectively. It was also linked to critical thinking and supported the student in using his or her prior experience and knowledge to solve real problems. The students developed new roles in this environment as they became empowered to reflect about their own learning and language. They began to assume responsibility for their own literacy development as they made coherent connections among skills, strategies, and how this knowledge was integrated into real life.

### Creativity and Active Learning (The Emergence of Constructivism)

Everett was able to be more creative because of the freedom in this class:

Creativity affects every conceivable area of your life. You can be a creative athlete, artist, musician, writer or whatever. When you are engaged in a creative process, you no longer act out a structure in the process and the steps you have been trained to go through. It becomes more like a white water experience. When I write, I am able to forget what is going on and I let the words take over. They become a part of me as they flow onto the paper. I don't think about grammar or anything. I just write (Interview, February 24, 1992).

Kandis was able to describe how this class had challenged her to be a better thinker and a better student. She made the biggest progress in her writing during the

year by learning how to write different types of pieces. She now understood the difference between a persuasive piece and a personal narrative. She also recognized that she must not to be so wordy and to get to the point more effectively. She noticed that this class had affected how she discussed ideas in all areas of her life, not just other classes. She was now able to narrow the subject to just the important points.

Matt was very excited about the change in his thinking ability. His first attempt at writing was a personal narrative then he developed the ability to write fiction.

When I write, I begin the process and then it just goes on its own -- it may be four pages long before I stop. My writing has become more involved. Instead of thinking in a limited way, I now think ahead to how the story is going to develop and how it will conclude. I am able to plan mentally, although sometimes, the story takes on a life of its own. I become a character and then I am not sure how the story will turn out (Interview, April 30, 1992).

Matt was also aware that because he read two days a week in this class, that his reading had improved significantly. He now had confidence in his reading ability, and that was reflected in other classes. He could read faster and comprehend more. He also read for pleasure every night at home which was new for him. He knew that his ability to write had also improved because he read all of the time now. He knew that he had improved as a writer because he was able to use more details.

He had also become a better speaker because of this class.

I don't just speak without thinking any more. I analyze what I want to



say and then it makes more sense (Interview, April 30, 1992).

### Discussion of the Emergence of Constructivism

Brown and Campione (1990) described the student as an intelligent novice who possesses a wide repertoire of strategies for literacy which include:

1. clarifying the purposes of reading;
2. spontaneously making use of relevant background knowledge;
3. allocating attention to major content;
4. critically evaluating content for consistency and compatibility with prior knowledge;
5. monitoring comprehension;
6. drawing inferences; and
7. criticizing, refining, and extending new knowledge by imagining other uses for the newly acquired knowledge.

The whole language reading/writing workshop is an active learning environment where students have the opportunity to gain a deep understanding of their own literacy. They learn to use the skills associated with reading, writing, speaking, and listening intuitively. They also learn literacy strategies that are viable across purposes and everyday learning experiences. They understand how to have control over their learning through creating useful contexts that organize their knowledge with real life experiences. They begin to use self-regulated, creative, and critical thinking to solve authentic literacy problems. As they succeed in the whole language environment, they are motivated to achieve new skills and to take new risks thus becoming life-long learners.

Students in this class were viewed from three psychological constructs: aptitude, learning-development, and achievement. Interviews, observations, and physical traces were analyzed in accordance with these categorical constructs to help determine into which of three groups: initial (+), transitional (+ +), expert or desired state (+ + +) students fell. Table 5 presents a picture of each student's literacy development. Their development occurs because they were constructing meaning in a whole language environment as opposed to being given direct instruction in the process of writing and strategies for reading and formats for speaking and listening. As they produced and self-assessed their products, they moved on a continuum from an initial understanding of literacy to a deeper understanding that included higher order thinking skills, strategic flexibility, adaptive control, and achievement motivation.

Table 5 is a profile of individual student literacy development as determined by interrater agreement between both teachers through an analysis of student interviews, surveys, assessments, and products. This analysis was adapted from Snow's (1989) network of psychological constructs for research on assessment in learning from instruction. The profile reflects student's deep understanding, higher order thinking skills, strategic flexibility, adaptive control, and achievement motivation.

Table 5

## Matrix for Psychological Constructs

Student	Conceptual	Procedural	Learning	Self Regulatory	Motivational
1. Erika	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++
2. Jason	++	+	+	+	++
3. Keith	+++	+++	++	+	+
4. J.B.	++	++	++	++	++
5. Jennifer	++	++	++	++	+++
6. Douglas	++	++	+++	+++	+++
7. Samantha	+	+	+	+	+
8. Teresa	++	++	++	+++	+++
9. Steve	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++
10. Trina	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++
11. Michael	+	+	++	+	+++
12. Robert	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++
13. Joe	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++
14. Everett	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++
15. Nathan	++	++	++	+	++
16. Kandis	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++
17. Matt	++	++	++	++	+++
18. Connie	++	++	++	++	++
19. N.S.	++	++	++	+++	+++
20. R.C.	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++
21. S.T.	++	++	++	+++	+++
22. S.H.	++	++	++	+++	+++

Note: Aptitude Constructs Initial States = +;  
 Learning-Development Constructs Transitions = ++;  
 Achievement Constructs Desired States = +++.

### Changing Student Concepts (Constructed Student Outcomes)

For active learning to occur, the teacher must be able to create an environment that maximizes the possibility for individual growth. Elements of such a classroom include student belief that they have the time to achieve mastery in a language-rich environment that provides many choices and opportunities for collaboration without threat to their personal integrity.

In this reading/writing classroom that is the focus of this study, there were numerous individual differences that could have a bearing on the acquisition and use of new information. There were cultural differences, language disabilities, various levels of self-concept, dependency, motivation, and growth. The third part of this story examines how this whole language environment encouraged individual literacy development through its inclusiveness.

### Benchmarks of Success

While the flexibility of this English class supported students who were very different in their abilities to achieve individual success, Joe was very insightful in his expression of this phenomena. Joe was encouraged by his awareness that he was being assessed on his individual growth. The individualized assessment that was an integral part of this reading/writing workshop model empowered him to develop his literacy. This could only occur because he experienced individual purpose, unity, relevance, and pertinence.

When I write my first draft, I don't think about grammar, I just want to get my ideas on paper. It is during the revisions that I start looking for

grammatical mistakes. I might find run-on sentences -- that was a problem I had at the beginning of the year. I don't have that problem any more -- I can self-correct. It has now become spontaneous -- I don't have to even think about it. This is like a test. I am graded on improvement. Each new piece of writing is a demonstration of improvement. This type of testing is more useful for me than the other type of tests I used to have, because it is more individual. Someone else will have a different weak point from me. If the teacher is teaching to the whole class, a student may have a totally different problem and never get it solved. In this class, you have a specific problem and there is an immediacy to the response. This is always better than the whole class studying the same thing at the same time whether you are good or bad at the skill. It makes this class totally individualized. It is individualized learning and assessment (Interview, April 27, 1992).

The primary purpose of assessment must be to communicate to the student and teacher useful information about teaching and learning. If the student's individual interests and needs are not served by the assessment, his or her individual learning problem is not solved. The assessment must be grounded in a context that encourages the student to reflect constructively about the process of reading and writing.

### Natural Environment

Students defined natural environment as their interests and what they knew best from their immediate environment. The benefits of curriculum, instruction, and assessment evolving from student interest and need sustained student motivation because they witnessed meaningful growth. Everett was an example of the importance of allowing students to make choices based on their interests and environment. Everett

was able to demonstrate growth by using familiar information.

The tests in this class all involve writing. The mini-lessons make it easier to listen because it involves a shorter amount of time and one basic skill or concept to concentrate on. Then when you use the concept or skill presented in the mini-lesson in your writing, it becomes yours. You are graded on how you improve in this class and this makes it easy to demonstrate improvement. By being able to chose what I read and write about, it allows me to draw on my own experience. I am able to write about things that I know (Interview, February 24, 1992).

The evolutionary nature of the workshop pedagogy allowed the teacher to build a curriculum based on the personal and social experiences of each of the students. Students were able to bring meaning to familiar texts which helped in the organization of their own knowledge base. The constructive, interactive process of the mini-lesson provides models that were specific to individual needs with the teacher reflecting with each student about the thinking process involved in applying the skill or strategy taught in the mini-lesson.

### Independent Learners

Jennifer was a student who was highly dependent upon teacher support to succeed. In a performance-based environment she was able to set reasonable goals for herself and to accomplish them as she became an effective reader and writer. She was able to articulate what was required to be a good or complete writer and she knew how she had improved in her writing and reading. An independent learner can self-assess as evidenced by Jennifer when she wrote:

My writing has improved by putting more in more details and developing ideas more fully with examples and information. I know that writing is more fun and it is easier for me than in September. I like to write about the memories that I've had, but I don't like to write fiction. I think fiction is really hard to write, because you have to have a good imagination. I think that my best piece is "Two Different Shoes," because it was funny. My worst piece is "Should Police Be Allowed To Chase a Vehicle Wanted For a Serious Crime?" because it was boring to me.

I have improved my reading by reading at least 20 minutes a day. I have read more books this year than ever before. I also understand what I read better. I like to read books that have good beginnings so that when you start to read, you can't put it down (Interview, April 29, 1992).

Students were supported in becoming self-directed readers and writers who created their own learning in collaboration with reflective teachers who mentored their individual growth. Because of the fair and equitable qualities inherent in the manner in which students were assessed in the reading/writing workshop, the focus became growth and not the disjointed evaluation of individual assignments with a final grade.

### Sense of Security

Nathan was another student who had never been successful academically at school and therefore had become very insecure. He worked hard all year to improve his reading and writing. He felt secure enough with these teachers to risk failure; and therefore, he succeeded. His sports activities got in the way of his doing homework on a regular basis. His insecurities about himself caused problems in his ability to accept others who were different. In spite of barriers, he accomplished a lot of firsts

because of this class -- he read a book, wrote more than one draft of a piece, and learned tolerance for other students.

Because students like Nathan were not compared with other students in determining their value as a learner, they gained a respect for themselves and for others that they had not experienced in any other way. They became collaborators without fear of failure. They did not have to worry about competition for grades. They could be motivated to grow as individuals and were able to discover the benefits in collaborating with their peers in a community of learners.

#### Discussion of Student Conceptual Change

The students recognized their use of higher order thinking skills, their depth of knowledge, their connectedness to the world beyond the classroom, their meaningful conversations and the social support of the whole language classroom for individual achievement. According to Newmann and Wehlage (1993), the above knowledge fit the framework for authentic instruction. It also fit the definition of authentic instruction according to the Atwell reading/writing workshop design. In both models, students were supported in this whole language environment to become independent, self-directed learners. The active learning environment supported the formative evaluation of a student's reading and writing. Such an environment encouraged inquiry about authentic literacy problems. Students negotiated about creative solutions to real problems as they engaged in substantive conversation. Their depth of



knowledge was expanded over time as they made connections beyond the classroom. They directed their own learning as they were supported by their teachers to use their intuition and cognition to solve problems in new ways. Students gained a new perspective about themselves as learners. They experienced the freedom of choice and gained a new sense of their strengths and weaknesses. It was the literacy process that was integral to this whole language class that supported the student in detaching him or herself from the task at hand to reflect upon his or her efforts objectively and thus to gain control over the cognitive task at hand.

### Regular Students

The key to literacy development was the belief of the teacher in the ability of the student to demonstrate what he or she knew and in the possibility for student growth. Each student that the researcher interviewed commented that this was the first time that a teacher had ever trusted them to choose what they needed to learn. The fact that Mr. S. and Mrs. H. took the time to confer with each student about his or her reading and writing sent a strong message of caring and concern for what that student thought. As students began to feel that they were important enough for these teachers to want to hear their opinions, each student's self-image grew. Students commented over and over that this was the first time that a teacher wanted to know what they thought. Every student who was interviewed said that teachers had only been interested in how well they could regurgitate answers, but not in what they

actually felt or thought about anything. The personal attention that was given to each student in this class allowed the student to begin where he or she was and to grow. This was a key element in all of the reflective statements. Even if the teachers had a negative feeling or opinion about some aspect of the student's work, it was not conveyed to the student. The student perceived only positive feedback from Mr. S. and Mrs. H. This atmosphere nurtured student growth as readers, writers, listeners, and speakers. Students were able to reflect about their own thought processes through this interaction and they enjoyed the discovery.

### Foreign Students

Because this high school focused on providing a meaningful education for an increasing number of second language learners and students from diverse backgrounds, Mr. S. and Mrs. H. monitored the progress of the ESL students in the class very carefully.

The whole language workshop approach, by its very structure, allowed for assignments and activities that promoted understanding, acceptance, and sharing of cultural differences. Several ESL students chose to write pieces about their home countries. The ESL students demonstrated big gains in their literacy skills because they had a regular time scheduled for reading and writing and because they had modelling and response from their peers and teachers. Because students shared their writings in class, an atmosphere of acceptance and interest was established. During

conferences, the teachers were able to promote a positive attitude toward students' backgrounds as they expressed a genuine interest in the content of the writings.

Students worked hard to improve their writing because they knew that their classmates and teachers were interested. The following essays written by four different foreign students illustrate how the whole language class contributed to the enhancement of each student's self-worth as an individual:

Korean.

There are a lot of differences between Korean schools and American schools. Some things are the same, but some things are different. I went to an enormous school in Korea. There were more than 4,000 students, including high school students. At that time there were no sports teams in school. I play sports, but there were no sports teams in school. I think it would be fun, if there are sports teams in school. It does not mean that there are no sports teams in school in Korea. Some students stayed after school, and played baseball or soccer, or any kind of sports they wanted.

Korean students study hard. As my grade became higher I had to study harder to be a straight student in the twelfth grade. We had to spend more than fifteen hours studying. I think Korean schools have too much expectations of students. As I told you before we have to study hard, so everyone is competitor to one another, but we are friends after school. I took more than ten subjects in middle school, so my daily schedule was different. When Korean teachers grade, they do not count homework, quizzes, participation grade, etc., but they only count test grades. It might be different in high school. And the report card tells the rank.

In Korean school we have ten minutes of break. We use this time to do homework. We do it three times because homework is very important to understand the lessons. Each class has their own room, so they make their classes beautiful like bringing flowers and curtains. Also they clean their classrooms. The school also gives prizes for that. Also all students must join clubs. We go to clubs during the seventh period. We have it two times a month. There are soccer, badminton, reading, etc.

I like Korean PE class better than here. A lot of sport events happen in PE class. Korea divides each grade into ten classes. So each class plays against one another, and the winner gets a prize.

I liked everything in school except studying, but Korean students study hard so that after graduate from college, they get jobs, marry, and then enjoy their lives (S. H., Portfolio, Draft 2, 11/20/91).

### Afghani.

S. T., an immigrant from Afghanistan, came to the class as one of four

English-as-a-Second-Language Students. According to her:

... this is the first time that I have begun to think in English. It was difficult at first to share with the teachers and the students. My writing topics were sometimes embarrassing, but it was what I knew to write about - my life (Interview, March 9, 1992).

### Final Draft

What is different from Americans' bathing habits and Muslim bathing habits? Americans' bathe once a day and we don't. If you tell Americans that we don't bathe once a day, that we bathe once a week they think we stink. That's not true.

People from different areas of the world do similar things - eat, sleep, work, learn, and bathe. These very simple things may be done differently for very good reasons.

Americans bathe at least once a day for the purpose of cleaning, health care, and personal refreshment. While, many cultures in the Middle East and Asia bathe for entirely different reasons. Instead of bathing once a day, the people of the East will wash at least five times a day, based on their religious believe.

Upon using the bathroom for getting rid of your body waste, Easterners believe they must wash their personal body parts to be prepared to do their Prayer to Allah (God). If we do not wash after using the toilet, our body is not clean. Therefore we cannot pray. If you use the restroom here, you will use

toilet paper, but not in my country. Usually Muslims use water instead of toilet paper. Therefore, Americans and Easterners both bathe, both cultures. They want their bodies clean, but for entirely different reasons (Portfolio, 2/18/92).

### Hispanic.

R.C., a student from El Salvador, described herself as a nonwriter in the writing survey taken in September of 1991. By March of 1992, she shared thoughts of her grandparents.

#### El Salvador

I was born in El Salvador in 1975. I lived there for about ten years. I really liked my country because I was living with the people I love. I grew up with my grandparents because my parents were in the U.S.

I was comfortable the way I was living in my country, until the Guerrillas came to my town. People were starting to get killed and the ones that were alive were scared. When my parents heard about the situation in my country, they wanted me to come to the United States. At that time I didn't understand why my parents wanted to separate me from my grandparents. I knew how the situation was and I was scared about it, but I still didn't want to leave my grandparents.

Saying good-bye to my grandparents was the worst experience I have ever had. I couldn't stand the idea of never seeing them again. But as time went by I started to get used to this country. Two years ago I went with my mom to my country to visit my grandparents. Now I understand why my parents brought me to their country. It wasn't to separate me from my grandparents, but to make sure that I could be safe (Portfolio, March, 1992).

### Chinese.

Some students used the workshop to help them be successful in other classes.

This was particularly true with the ESL students the researcher interviewed:

## Something I Like to Do and I Don't

### Draft 1

I had a math test on last Friday and a American study today. I got 106 points on math test and 55 points on American study. I'm sure if I studied A.S. before I took test I got good grade, but I didn't study. I studied math before took test. Why did I study math and didn't study A. S. I don't interested in A. S. But I have to study. I don't know what I have to do and how to study history. I need help for study, but nobody helped me. Before that I didn't try. Everything was my fault. From now I'll try hard every class and study hard whether I interested in or not for my future (Portfolio, 10/7/91).

Mrs. H: After conferencing with N., during which time we talked about the purpose of this piece, he decided to write a letter to his American Studies teacher (Interview, March 11, 1992).

### Final Piece

Dear Mr. M.

Hi. How are you? I'm writing letter to tell you that I'm frustrated about America Studies. I'm in trouble. I don't know what I have to do or how to study well. Sometimes I ask a question and you give me an answer, but I don't understand your answer.

You have to realize that I'm learning English now and don't speak and understand well. There are so many words that I don't know. I want to go to college, so I need good grades. Is there any way to get better grades? And can you help me?

Sincerely,

N.S.

### Comments on letter by N.S:

Since I began this letter I have spent more time studying America Studies. And I got a 96 on the last test. But I want you to understand that I still don't understand words that are said. I'll continue to do my best. But it is difficult.

Imagine if you suddenly found yourself in a Korean school. It would be difficult for you as well. This is the first time that I am learning English in this class with Mr. S. and Mrs. H. The ESL classes are too easy. I do homework, but I am not reading or writing like in this class (Portfolio, October 28, 1991).

### Special Education Students

This whole language classroom honored the diversity of students with different disabilities and learning styles. Amongst those were two students identified as attention deficit disordered and one dyslexic student. These students also achieved success.

Jason was language disabled. He handled a performance-based, reading/writing workshop approach to teaching English as an opportunity to explore his literacy. Jason liked to be able to choose what he read. In middle school he was assigned what to read. He read his very first book in the eighth grade. This class was different because he got to chose his own books. He had never read at home before; but now, he had time in class to get interested in a book and was eager to discover the end of the plot, so he was motivated to read at home.

I am busy at home with all of my activities; but now, I make time for reading. When I am interested in a book like *Call of the Wild*, I read it before bed for an hour or two each night. I finished the book that weekend and I had just started it on Thursday. I can read a lot better because of this class. I've always had a learning disability in reading; probably because I never practiced. I can read faster now and I understand what I read for the first time. I am mostly a verbal person. When someone tells me something or reads something to me, I remember it. I can decipher poetry if it is read to me, but if I read it on my own, I really never understood what I read. It is easier for me this year. I used to try to read out loud; but now I interact with what I read. If I read ... (he clamped his fist) ... I clamp my fist without

knowing it. I assume the part of a character in a book as I read. I am able to visualize what is going on. This has helped me in other classes. For example, in biology, we are going to dissect frogs, and I am picturing how to do this while my hands are making the movements. This is what I used to do when other people read to me; this is a first experience for me. My vocabulary has improved tremendously since I've been in this class. I can pull words out of my head more easily, because I have more vocabulary to chose from. I have seen the way words have been interpreted in books and put into sentences and it has broadened my horizons (Interview, April 28, 1992).

Jason was rewarded by his ability to verbalize how best he learned. He was aware that one learns to read by reading and he was motivated by his own success at being able to not only find the time to read but also by his desire for learning.

For many students with disabilities this was the first opportunity they ever had to gain a sense of what their place was in the learning process. They were validated by their own awareness of personal achievement. Such a system that has individual growth as its only external absolute will not only sustain motivation, it will feed upon its own energy to fuel students to search for new achievements in literacy development.

### Minority Students

The minority students were represented by Asian Americans, African Americans, and Hispanic Americans. It was easy in this whole language environment for the teachers to honor the individual cultural differences of the students and to respect their need to make choices based on their unique language experiences.



Erika was a perfect example of this sustained motivation and desire to excel. She planned to continue to write during the summer. She was going to an Upward Bound Program at the university in the summer. She looked forward to school in the fall with even more incentive to succeed.

The most important thing that I have gained from this class is a sense of self-confidence. I was very shy before I came to this school. I have been able to express myself better to my peers. From my reading, I have been able to share stories about my black culture with the class. Since this year, I have become an officer in a young black women's group and in other organizations at school and at church. This class supported me as a person (Interview, April 23, 1992).

The following table summarizes each student's perception of him or herself in relationship to the reading/writing workshop design and performance-based model in this whole language class. Perceptions were analyzed by comparing student interviews with teacher or counselor observations. Positive (+), negative (-), or neutral (0) statements were verified or nullified by teacher or counselor observations or student products. The students' statements, which are coded according to name and number, fell into three groups relative to their level of insight about their learning needs, their understanding of their literacy growth and their level of trust that emerged from this environment.

Table 6  
Student Conceptual Statements

Students	Statements of Learning Needs	Statements of Growth	Statements of Trust
E1	The most important thing that I have gained from this class is a sense of self-confidence. (+)	I have been able to write well for the first time. (+)	This class supported me as a person. (+)
S1	I made better grades in Mexico. (-)	I have improved in my ability to write. (+)	The American School in Mexico was far superior to this school. (-)
J1	I am mostly a verbal person. (+)	I understand what I read for the first time. (+)	This year I have time to go back to change mistakes. (+)
K1	I am going to night school to get my GED.(-)	I have turned in no reading letters. (-)	To be a good writer, you have to want to write. (o)
J2	I believe that my grade should be a B. (-)	I will finish one book by the end of this quarter. (-)	In all I believe that this course is good. (o)
D	As a learner I learn through actually doing something. (+)	Because of this class, I have begun to write more. (+)	It is easier to learn when I get to talk to a teacher. (+)
T1	Reading letters gives you the opportunity to write to your teacher each week to provide them with a breakdown of your weekly progress. (+)	I can tell that I am a better writer. (+)	You can ask questions when you feel the need to and you will get an answer the same day. (+)
S2	I have learned that you not only need to know your subject to write; you need to know your audience very well. (+)	My writing has improved by being able to get a reader involved with my story. (+)	I feel comfortable reading in this class. (+)
T2	It is difficult for me to judge my own piece. (+)	My skills as a writer have improved. (+)	I appreciate taking the time to read my pieces although you told me nothing I didn't know. (+)

Students	Statements of Learning Needs	Statements of Growth	Statements of Trust
M1	For someone to be a good writer, they have to finish school. (o)	I don't think that I have improved that much at writing. (-)	These are the first books that I have every read. (+)
R	the beginning of an adventure starts in a library or a bookstore. (+)	What I have learned is more about form and punctuation. (+)	This class opened the door to a vast assortment of books. (+)
J4	Each new piece of writing is a demonstration of improvement. (+)	Because of this class I am able to listen more critically. (+)	Your needs are met individually in this class. (+)
E2	I am able to be more creative because of the freedom in this class. (+)	I have improved as a writer by being able to edit more effectively. (+)	This is the first class I've been in where books weren't banned. (+)
N	I had a hard time picking out a book, but I finally found one I like. (+)	I read my first book in this class. (+)	I have been able to write easily because of this class. (+)
K2	My reading has always been good because I like to read, but I have been lazy. (+)	I have made the biggest improvement in my writing this year. (+)	I like the fact that I have been able to conference with both my teachers this year. (+)
M2	Mr. S. called his tests a quest because they were a mind adventure. (+)	Because I read two days a week in this class, my reading has improved significantly. (+)	Teachers praise you in a conference and that encourages me to revise my work. (+)
N.S.	ESL classes are too easy. (+)	This is the first time I have learned English. (+)	I have been able to read and write. (+)

Note: Positive/Successful = +; Neutral = o; Negative/Failure = -

## Discussion of Results

### Final Reflections

The final reflections consist of thoughts about success, student diversity, authentic language, thoughts and knowledge of the student, natural learning environments, authentic instruction, curriculum, and assessment.

Student diversity in this case study had no bearing upon success. Natural learning environments were created that focused on the authentic language, thoughts, and knowledge of the student. This active learning environment focused on student strengths; not weaknesses. The student was treated with respect and trusted to make learning choices. Multiple opportunities and time for success facilitated students monitoring of their own learning. Parent, teachers, and students were partners in the social interaction that fostered learning. The definitions of authentic instruction, curriculum, and assessment emerged in this whole language environment.

Chapter 5 examines the answers to the original questions in this study. Through a final analysis of the data, relationships among the themes that emerged in Chapter 4 and the theories that were examined in Chapters 1, 2, and 3 will be explored in order to negotiate an understanding of how literacy develops in the active learning environment of a whole language classroom.

Evidence of teacher and district change contained in the following sections leads into Chapter 5. There is no follow-up data on students in this case study. The continued literacy development of the students in this class could constitute an additional study.

### A Final Teacher Reflection

In order to present data that was a reasonable representation of reality, the researcher returned to the participants in the study to present a reconstruction of the observations, interviews, and physical traces.

Mrs. H. had taken a leave of absence from teaching until her preschool children entered school. The following is an interview with Mr. S. almost a semester later in November, 1992. The students in the original class had entered the next level of English offered at the high school.

Mr. S. reflected upon what he had learned from using the Atwell model with tenth graders in high school and the meaning that it had for him.

Mr. S:       The reading/writing workshop model doesn't work for every student because of levels of maturity. Some students have a real problem with it because it is easy to get caught up with your buddy or your friend and to start talking to them when you should be reading or writing. This is particularly true of students who have had academic problems before and are used to getting "D's" and "F's". I also think that it has a lot to do with home life. If the kid's parent accepts "D's" and "F's," then it is real difficult for us to motivate that student.

Sometimes though, a kid will just begin to spark. J.S. comes to mind -- he was such a student. His grades were terrible when he came to our class. When he applied himself, he did beautifully. Another student is C. S., an elemental writer, who finally was able to produce because of the environment of our class. This model works very well for these kids.

There is such a variety of literature that is available for

all students to succeed in a heterogeneous environment. You have the freedom to start where a student is. I don't really care what reading level my student is on when they come out of here. What I care about is that they are given a sense that they can read a book and can think and can write their reflections on what they have read. I want them to be able to add to their intelligence. I want them to be exposed to more ideas and vocabulary.

I believe that social interaction is necessary for literacy. They must have this modeled and must have the opportunity to discuss what they have read. Rather than jamming it down their throats with reading letters, I want to constantly model it with mini-lessons and with opportunities in their journals to do this -- it's kinder and gentler. The assessment of these journals can be credit, no credit or half credit. I am trying to integrate skills with what they have produced (Interview, September 10, 1992).

### A Final Reflection on the District

In addition to interviewing participants in the study, the researcher also reviewed documents that came out after this study that were representative of the school district's philosophy on literacy development. Six goals were identified in January of 1993, as the basis for restructuring the curriculum. These goals were derived from national goals, the State *Common Core*, standards and goals of professional educational associations, the current literature and research, and the six year strategic plan developed by the school district. The restructuring of the curriculum was also positively affected by the results of this reading/writing workshop.

All students will become:

1. good thinkers and problem-solvers;
2. effective communicators;
3. users of technology;
4. understanding of their own and other cultures;
5. good citizens in our democracy and in the world community;
6. mentally and physically productive through wellness and aesthetics.

As the curriculum teams discussed and developed drafts of restructured guides, several themes emerged. These were delineated by the associate superintendent for instruction as follows:

#### Curriculum Development

1. Leadership role in curriculum restructuring transfers to the teachers.
2. Facilitators with knowledge of curriculum development and group process lead restructuring teams.

#### Staff Development

1. Extensive staff development must be planned and provided consistently throughout the process, including resource people in the schools to assist with lesson planning and development of the Resource Guide.
2. Staff development needs at school level increase dramatically requiring in-class support and peer coaching for effectively changing instructional methodology.

#### Instructional Methodology

1. Increased individualization of instruction will occur.

2. Instruction will combine academics and application for open-ended problem-solving through teamwork.
3. Career development and technology will form the common strand across all areas of curriculum and instruction in preparing all students for the world of work.
4. Types of formal labs will increase (including design labs, electronics, robotics, optics, biotechnology, etc.)
5. Senior projects requiring problem solving and exploration within a student-selected application area will be the culmination of K-12 schooling.

#### Assessment

1. Student achievement will be assessed through demonstrations and/or on-demand performance as part of a balanced assessment program.
2. Assessment content will correlate with the State *Common Core*, School Division *Common Goals*, and the goals of the *Strategic Plan*.

#### Summary

This case study provides a thick description of the development of literacy through whole language in a tenth-grade English classroom. The teachers in this specific classroom were never totally aware of the system change occurring around them after their initial involvement in the district's restructuring efforts.

Mrs. H. continually stated:

We were very isolated because of our location on the far western corner of the county and as a result of site-based management. In this school district, site-based management does not support a level of communication between other schools and other professionals.

Therefore, these teachers felt like isolated pioneers in the process of change. They



had visited elementary and middle schools where this type of curriculum was being used, but they knew that in high school, they were the first class of its kind in the county.

They were reflective researchers who read, studied, and who recognized that the traditional classroom structure was not commensurate with their beliefs. The traditional method of teaching English and of assessing students created feelings of discomfort with the lack of congruence between the ideal and what actually occurred in the classroom. Mrs. H. and Mr. S. had reached the highest level of concern -- a desire to create a new innovation that met the needs of all of their students.

The isolation of these teachers was both good and bad. The unfortunate aspects of this isolation included the following:

1. They perceived a lack of support.
2. They only had each other to reflect with (even though they also used the lab director and the researcher).

The positive aspect of this isolation was that Mr. S. and Mrs. H. were able to maintain a clear focus on what was necessary to support the development of literacy in students:

1. As teachers, they tried to remain as facilitators for students to experience successful learning.
2. They individualized so that students could personalize knowledge and maintain a high expectation for success.
3. Students were supported in internalizing skills and strategies to use in problem solving.

Besides the teachers, the most successful persons in this case study, were the students, who, because of the freedom and time that this action-oriented learning afforded them, were able to reflect about their own literacy for perhaps the first time. The Atwell reading/writing workshop provided opportunities for students to reflect with teachers and peers about what they had learned from their personal experience. Students also had the time to talk, listen, tell stories, ask questions, and to refine ideas as they read and wrote. The valuable core of any new system of change in any educational setting is providing time for reflectivity, the trust of ownership and opportunities to respond authentically to the environment. "Students won't learn and teachers won't collaborate if they don't feel respected.... The real methodology for system change begins and ends with ongoing authentic conversations about the important questions. ... The scarcest resource in the change process - even more than money - is time -- ... Time for teachers to discuss students' needs, observe one another's classes, assess their work, design new curriculums, visit other schools, and attend workshops; time for teachers and students to get to know one another; time for parents and community members to become involved in children's learning; time for leaders at all levels to reflect and plan collaboratively" (Wagner, 1993).

## CHAPTER 5

## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The basis for the nine common principles that undergird the Coalition of Essential Schools ... is to help all students think; people learn best when they are engaged in something important; you can't teach a student unless you know him or her well; and exhibition is superior to tests because it helps you and the student see what the youngster really knows.

Sizer (1986)

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe and document the perceptions of twenty-two tenth-grade English students and their two language arts teachers as they implemented Atwell's whole language reading/writing workshop approach toward the development of true literacy, which was defined in this study as the ability to use critical thinking skills to solve problems. The Atwell pedagogy was chosen because it supports the creation of an active learning environment that intertwines curriculum, instruction, and assessment to produce literate students who exhibit "deep understanding, higher order skills, strategic flexibility, adaptive control and achievement motivation" (Snow, 1989). This whole language model combines the theories of the Pragmatic and Cognitive movements of the twentieth century which focus on social interaction in the construction of meaning to solve problems. Meaning is derived from the reciprocity between the student, his or her peers, and the teacher.

The whole language theory purports that literacy emerges because the student recognizes his or her place in the process of learning as he or she interacts with the environment. In order for the student to develop literacy skills that will transfer to other environments, he or she must be given time for reflection, trust to gain

ownership and control over individual growth, and response from a community of learners of which he or she is a member. The belief is that by replacing isolated skills instruction with meaningful content that is connected to the student's prior knowledge, the student will be able to think critically, construct meaning, and solve authentic literacy problems. Students will become theorizers about their own learning. It is also the belief of whole language practitioners that such an environment will empower students to become thoughtful workers as Marzano (1992) described "through developing the ability to process information; the ability to communicate effectively; the ability to work collaboratively in groups; and the ability to use self-regulated, creative and critical thinking."

Atwell's workshop model, which represents the actual application of both Cognitive and Pragmatic theories, is an authentic assessment of student literacy. In this study, theory was grounded in the contextual descriptions that the students and teachers revealed through interviews, portfolios, journals, and observations of their learning to be readers and writers.

As the study progressed, the researcher was able to observe various categories emerging that formed common patterns or themes: changing teacher roles; changing student roles; and changing student concepts. This study is based upon a discussion of these three themes.

#### Five Questions

One can understand the development of literacy by answering the following questions.

Question One What were the goals of the teachers and the activities used to meet them?

The primary goals of the teachers were fulfilled in their roles of observer, facilitator, evolutionist, emancipator, and reflector. The teachers in this whole language model had to become formative rather than summative observers in the learning process. Mr. S. and Mrs. H. focused their attention on the learning process rather than making grades the sole standard for success. They developed keen skills as observers of the literacy process that nourished the student's capacity to monitor and guide his or her own learning.

Mr. S. and Mrs. H. facilitated the development of student-directed learning through the promotion of a constructive learning environment. Within this active learning environment, reflective thinking resulted. Teachers led students in the use of response logs consisting of written conversations between student and teacher about literature. Students also learned reflective listening and speaking through editing conferences with peers and teachers. Finally, students were taught individual reading and writing skills as they needed them. This enabled students to understand how to use the knowledge base they had acquired in past English classes to solve personal literacy problems.

Teachers took advantage of the varied language experiences of the students, and they developed a curriculum based on the many and varied experiences. The curriculum integrated instruction and assessment in a meaningful manner so that each

student could experience growth.

Mr. S. and Mrs. H. were able to free students to work on real literacy problems as a result of the flexibility of the whole language classroom. The problems were as diverse as the students. Students were given the subject of English as a vehicle with which to think insightfully about real problems that were meaningful to them. The students gained a sense of independence and validation as they explored issues of abuse, disability, family membership, ethnicity, learning styles, thinking, creativity, success and self-concept.

The teachers reflected with students as they read, wrote, listened and spoke for a variety of purposes. Mr. H. and Mrs. S. used student's individual literacy problems to plan mini-lessons when the problem applied to more than one person. Supported by a community of learners who participated in cooperative groups and class discussions, students felt free to take literacy risks.

All of these goals and activities and their resultant teacher and student roles were also the whole language goals of the Atwell reading/writing workshop model. Support for the emergence of reciprocal teacher/student roles was provided by the theories of cognitive psychologists like Glaser (1976), Resnick (1981), Gardner (1983) and Shulman (1986) who believe that learning occurs because the teacher has created an environment where the student has been put in an active role of constructing meaningful knowledge.

Question Two Did the teachers view the learning process differently?

Teachers came to see that the learning process was very different from the traditional view in which the teacher transfers information to students. They began to view knowledge as constantly changing and learning as an interactive process. The teachers began to understand that curriculum and instruction were dependent upon student environment and experience. Teachers helped students use and interpret their normal language in order to become aware of the capacity for intellectual growth. The learning process was measured by whether or not the student demonstrated growth in his or her awareness of literacy problems, growth in the ability to think insightfully about possible solutions and growth in the performance of authentic literacy acts.

The perceptions of both Mr. S. and Mrs. H. were that students had grown personally and academically and that the workshop approach was successful in supporting the development of literacy. Teachers discovered that tolerance and interaction were integral elements of the learning process. One of the purposes for developing the Atwell whole language program was to document the impact of heterogeneity on the achievement of at-risk students in an active learning environment. ESL students, special education students, and those students with low test scores were considered "at risk."

The teachers were encouraged by the quality of work that the students produced. Both teachers observed improvement in the quality of ideas and the mechanics of the students' writing. In addition, they saw a positive attitude emerge towards the class and a high level of engagement. There was significant increase in

the amount of interaction between the students and their peers, which created opportunities for students to learn from one another.

As a result of Mr. S. and Mrs. H. viewing the learning process differently, student achievement took on an entirely different goal. Teaching and learning became collaborative as students and teachers worked together to solve specific literacy problems in an experiential context. Curriculum evolved from teacher expertise and student interest. Instruction was directed by student need and natural language. Assessment was continuous and authentic enabling students and teachers to maintain an open system of inquiry. This sustained a high level of motivation.

In essence, the teachers viewed the learning process differently by focusing on the individual cultural differences of the students that allowed the students to freely act and interact. The process was not one in which learning was based on a fixed curriculum, but rather self-selected literature, individual reflection through writing and self-assessment.

Question Three Did the students view the learning process differently?

Through the use of the reading/writing workshop model, students discovered a method of learning that directly related to their life and growth experience. The design of the class helped them to accept more responsibility in the learning process. As the ownership for their learning began to shift from the teacher to a personal sense of control, they began to experience authentic growth and to express a desire to continue in the development of their literacy.



Learning was effected by acquiring a skill or a strategy using personal reading and writing. Certain traditional educational tools became meaningful to them in this context. For example, grammar became important to them for the first time because they understood its usefulness in being able to express in writing their personal experience. Literature related to real life and writing was important outside of the classroom.

They also began to communicate on a different level with peers, teachers, and their parents. They discovered that they could more clearly articulate their feelings; that they were better readers, writers, listeners, speakers, and thinkers in other subjects; and they were more adept at solving problems as diverse as algebra, sign language and biology.

The students were pleased with their personal growth. They expressed this satisfaction through appreciation to their teachers and peers who had recognized their individual worth; and they cited in their evaluation that the freedom of this class encouraged their creativity, increased their ability to communicate with others, and enabled them to interact in a heterogeneous community of learners.

These results were supported by the research of Wiggins (1995) in his description of the necessity of a coherence to curriculum. He states that there has to be a rational relationship of the parts to the whole for students to gain control over what Gardner and Boix-Mansilla (1994) refer to as "performance for understanding." If students are to develop critical thinking skills, they must be rewarded as Wiggins (1995) states for successive approximations in the completion of worthwhile tasks.

Students in this whole language class were able to gained a more complete view of learning, thinking, reading, writing, speaking, and listening. They felt valued as persons who were learning about their literacy. They were challenged to grow as whole persons, not just as students in an English 10 class who were working for a grade.

Question Four What student products and activities helped change their literacy development?

Reading, writing, and reflection were the basic components of the curriculum. Daily documentation reflected student progress. Monday through Wednesday, students worked on individual pieces of writing with an ongoing assessment of student achievement. Content conferences occurred as teachers circulated among students, helping them with their drafts in progress. Editing conferences occurred when students had completed their drafts and had self-edited. Through this process, old patterns of learning were broken, old understandings shattered, and new patterns of human interaction were formed.

The change in the students' literary development was documented with weekly notations by teachers that charted student progress. In addition students wrote weekly letters demonstrating thoughtful, critical responses to their books addressing issues of theme and author purpose. In editing conferences with teachers, the students were enabled to make connections and move to higher levels of thinking.

Students from diverse backgrounds believed that the whole language workshop

approach allowed for assignments and activities that promoted understanding, acceptance, and the sharing of cultural differences. They worked hard to improve their reading and writing because they knew that their classmates and teachers believed in them.

All of the students' work throughout the year were contained in portfolios further documenting their progress. Among these products were:

1. reading response logs
2. graphic organizers
3. dialogues between two characters
4. compare and contrast essays
5. short stories
6. poems
7. critical analyses
8. journals
9. character sketches
10. autobiographical narratives
11. persuasive essays
12. critiques
13. reading letters
14. ballads
15. self-assessments

These were authentic products not produced artificially by a textbook author or a curriculum supervisor or a department chairperson or a teacher to meet the requirements of a school district for documentation. As researchers like Calkins (1986), Atwell (1987), Graves (1990), and Rief (1992) have advocated, students were free to chose their own books, projects and writing topics that were personally interesting and relevant.

Question Five Does whole language work in developing literacy?

In order for whole language to work it has to have the following characteristics:

1. a classroom environment in which students have the freedom to develop their own literacy in relation to their personal experience and feelings;
2. the use of critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving through interaction with peers and teachers;
3. ability of teachers to let curriculum and instruction evolve in relationship to student need and experience; and
4. achievement based on self-assessment and authentic student-developed products.

In the Atwell reading/writing workshop model used in this project where the above components were present, the students expanded their vocabulary in order to define, clarify, and extend concepts to convey meaning at a higher level of reading and writing. They learned and used a self-monitoring system based on strategies in the reading and writing process. They recognized and understood the effect of literary elements and devices. They created, analyzed, evaluated, and revised all of their writings in order to understand concepts and to convey meaning at a higher level. They recognized and used the standard connections and organization of written communication in order to express ideas accurately and specifically. They demonstrated a proficiency in both pre-planned and spontaneous speaking and listening. They demonstrated that the listening aspect of the communication process is a basic element for receiving, interpreting, evaluating, and responding to information.

These are the benchmarks they achieved as they developed their literacy.

As Winograd, Paris, and Bridge (1991) describe, student literacy development reflected both the processes of learning and products of knowledge. The assessment of this development was authentic in accordance with Marzano's (1992) description of its application to the workplace. Students established positive attitudes and perceptions about learning. They demonstrated instructional strategies that helped them acquire and integrate knowledge more effectively. They engaged in activities that encouraged extending and refining knowledge. They had numerous opportunities to use their knowledge meaningfully.

### Conclusions

The Atwell reading/writing model is a successful vehicle for literacy development. Teachers and students adopt new roles enabling them to become more effective problem solvers. An essential component of this model involves the teacher creating a flexible learning community where the student is trusted to assume ownership for his or her own growth as a reader, writer, listener, and speaker and the responsibility of using these skills in solving problems. There is a collaborative effort between the student and the teacher to choose meaningful content, benchmarks for success, and evidence of student self-reflection. This pedagogy combines curriculum, instruction, and assessment in an integrated way to support students in their active construction of knowledge and meaning as they use self-regulated, creative, and

critical thinking.

The documentation of student and teacher perceptions of literacy development in this tenth-grade whole language classroom confirm the theories of both the pragmatists and the cognitivists like Dewey (1916), Bruner, et al. (1966), Piaget and Inhelder (1969), Vygotsky (1978), Gardner (1983), Resnick (1986), Shulman (1986), Snow (1989), and Sternberg and Lubart (1991) that in order for teacher and student roles to change and for student concepts to develop, certain fundamentals had to be considered: time (for reflectivity), ownership, trust (or control), and response to the environment. According to Goodman (1986), these fundamentals also constitute the attributes of a whole language classroom which supports individual student literacy growth. The following conclusions from this study support these learning theories:

Conclusion One Students have to be active participants in a constructive learning environment to produce authentic products.

Students revealed that they had been able to learn and use skills from this class in a totally different way both because of the structure of the class (mini-lessons, conferences, learning logs, etcetera) and because of the way they were assessed through authentic reading and writing performances. Skills that had been memorized in previous English classes to be forgotten after tests, were now individually identified through conferences with teachers and were applied in written pieces. Students continually referred to the new experience of having the freedom to choose what they needed to learn and the medium through which they would learn to read and write.

They also commented on the time that they had to read and to write which was a new experience for each student. Because of academic freedom and the luxury of time, students read their first books or developed a new habit of reading. Writing for students became an opportunity to tell their individual stories. Through poetry, fiction, and research, students shared images of love, family, abuse, religion, war, school, and childhood. Through reading, they were able to develop an understanding of how an author's style affects plot and characterization and to use this modeled skill in their writing.

Student stated their belief that their growth as listeners, speakers, readers and writers in other classes could be attributed to the opportunities to learn and practice these skills in this class. A curious phenomena was that students were aware of the application of skills acquired in this class in subjects as diverse as geometry and history and chemistry.

Conclusion Two Teachers must facilitate rather than control the process of learning.

Because of their initiative, Mr. S. and Mrs. H. were able to support activities that produce fluent readers and writers. Mr. S. and Mrs. H. relinquished power and became facilitators for the building of relationships and experiences that were organized into meaningful patterns. All the aspects of the reading-writing workshop model were organized by the teachers into meaningful units which related to the overall concept or experience. Mini-lectures allowed for meaningful student-teacher interactions in conferences to clarify and confirm a hypothesis. The teachers

demonstrated how to guide student activities, modeled appropriate behavior, provided examples and turned student talk into useful communication. They listened to and valued student perceptions. Constructive listening encouraged the talker to reflect on the meaning of events and ideas in his or her reading and writing. Listening became a tool for empowerment enabling meaningful patterns to emerge.

The teachers used small group instruction and more heterogeneous grouping. Students were offered more choices in grouping and in the content of lessons. Students were provided with reasons for engaging in particular lessons. Students' interests and experiences were honored. They recognized that students learn all of the time and that they could build on this. They gave students trust, safety, respect, and rapport. They used student questions and ideas to guide lessons. They encouraged student initiation of ideas and of collaboration.

Conclusion Three Teachers must trust students, and students must know that they are trusted.

Each student's perception of his or her literacy development was affected by the relationship that had been developed between student and teacher. Students were very accurate in describing possible limitations due to disability, culture, effort, or previous educational experiences and how these perceived limitation had caused a teacher not to trust the student's learning choices in the past. Even if there was a discrepancy in this class between student and teacher perception of growth because of various limitations, that did not seem to affect student motivation. As long as the



student perceived that the teachers in this class respected him or her as an individual, he or she was willing to continue to produce in accordance with what was understood to be fair conditions that were controlled by individual efforts.

The flexibility of this English class allowed students, who were very different in their abilities, to be independent learners with the opportunity to succeed. Even though some students were not as responsible as others in handling their own academic progress, for many this was the first time that they had ever been trusted to have control over their own literacy. The issues of control and trust became opportunities for students to make choices based on their individual perceptions of what was important for them to be better readers and writers. The ability of these teachers to facilitate good student choices was limited by student history, the student's family support, and the student's maturity. In spite of what seemed to be very difficult odds to overcome, each student grew as a learner. The evidence is in their portfolios, their comments, their improved attendance, their lowered discipline referrals, and their desire to continue to improve as readers and writers.

Conclusion Four The student must be able to reflect upon and to develop his or her individual literacy.

Through this qualitative study, where the emphasis on the student, learning becomes an active process happening within and influenced by the student. Learning outcomes do not depend on what the teacher presents. They are an interactive result of what information is encountered and how the student processes it. The research

assumes a highly active role for students. Students do not enter the school with a blank slate (a behaviorist concept). Their minds are active and capable of weighing alternatives and reducing ambiguity. The method of teaching is inductive; whole meaningful experiences are perceived. Parts are related to a whole. Students confronted with a problem seek new information or rearrange old information to gain insight into its solution.

This view of learning presents a picture of learning as active, constructive, cumulative, and goal oriented. Both Ms. H. and Mr. S. changed their focus from the more traditional view of a teacher as the articulator of a large number of relevant facts and ideas. By reducing what is essential to know to a few worthy tasks they provided more time for real learning.

The teachers discovered that knowledge is not simply transferred by means of words without first agreeing as to their meaning and an experiential base. Explaining a problem does not lead to an understanding unless the learning has an internal scheme which maps what the student is hearing. They discovered that learning occurs when information is organized and reorganized and assimilated and then transferred to new situations. In order for students to become metacognitive thinkers, they needed time to reflect.

The teachers became researchers in the cognitive processes of their students as they developed a curriculum that met each student's developmental needs. They taught students to build cognitive relationships and to make connections among concepts. Mr. S. and Mrs. H. became active learners in the learner-teacher relationship. They

helped students see the facts and ideas as part of a larger concept. They introduced ambiguity to provide students opportunities to clarify the ambiguity. This allowed them the opportunity to suggest strategies for solving problems. As this process was occurring, they were gathering data on which they reflected at the end of every day which empowered them in their additional roles as observers, facilitators, evolutionists, and emancipators in the learning process. Thus, by taking the time for both themselves and the students to define and to redefine problems and to think insightfully about how to solve them a community of learners was formed.

### Limitations

This case study was designed to describe and document the development of literacy. The study was limited to one tenth-grade language arts class that was designed around Atwell's whole language reading/writing workshop model. The number of subjects in this study was limited to twenty-two tenth-grade students in this class, who agreed to be a part of the study, and their two language arts teachers. The findings are not generalizable to other settings or populations because an individual case study cannot stand for an entire group. On the other hand, the model was applied with such success in this instance, there is clear evidence that whole language is useful. It would be beneficial to have one hundred other similar studies. Nevertheless, this project has tangible implications for learning.

### Implications

Implication One Whole language helps students learn.

A strong implication from the results of this case study is that the empowerment of students to become literate will only occur when students experience individual purpose, unity, relevance, and pertinence. The assessment of authentic literacy then becomes a demonstration of genuine understanding of how to solve real problems. As Wiggins (1995) states, the student must experience the coherence of the curriculum for meaningful learning to occur. The Atwell reading/writing workshop model exemplifies the whole language theory of the unity of learning, that the parts must be related to the whole. The teachers in this whole language class facilitated the students making connections between the skills and the knowledge learned through reading, writing, speaking, and listening and everyday learning experiences. Students were given the opportunity in this class to develop beyond Gardner's (1983) concept of the "naive learner" or the "scholastic learner" to becoming an "expert or skilled person" through the integration of educational experience into an individual scheme of meaning.

Implication Two Authenticity is an essential aspect of whole language.

The purpose of assessment in a whole language classroom is to focus on the individual needs and interests of each student. This supports the student in the development of individual literacy. The student is not judged as deficient because of learning disabilities or a lack of educational experience or because of a different

cultural experience. Respect for each student as a partner in the process of learning is engendered through students having choices about what and how to learn. Active learning will only occur when a classroom environment is created that maximizes the possibility for individual growth and focuses on the strengths of the individual student. This happens when the teacher believes in the ability of each student to demonstrate what he or she knows and the possibility for student growth.

Implication Three Whole language and authentic assessment involve student interaction.

The whole language class is a community of learners. The student, teacher, and parent become partners in the process of developing literacy. Students are freed to reflect with peers, teachers, and their parents about an understanding of language through reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The assessment of literacy development is continuous and authentic with students obtaining meaning from interacting with their environment to enable them to acquire new knowledge. Goodman (1986) described the literacy process as the student using meaningful knowledge from their environment and experience in learning to read and write. Authentic assessments of this process of attaining meaning must reflect the social nature of what Blumer (1969) has defined as "symbolic interactionism."

Implication Four Teacher evaluation should be focused on learning instead of assigning grades.

According to Newmann and Wehlage (1993), for instruction to be authentic, it must support students learning "higher order thinking skills, a depth of knowledge, a connectedness to the world beyond the classroom, substantive conversation and provide social support for student achievement." The Atwell reading/writing workshop model of instruction is based on all of these elements. The student is supported in the inquiry about authentic literacy problems. By becoming engaged in what Dewey (1933) described as "worthwhile tasks," the student is supported in his or her successive attempts to learn something of value and the teacher is supported in his or her task as described by Wiggins (1995) of constructing genuine "educational experience out of problems as they arise in context." It is this collaborative process described by Bruner, et al (1966) as "continual discovery" that provides a student with the direct experience of what Wiggins (1995) defines as the "context of all work -- knowledge in use."

#### Suggestions for Further Study

This case study of the development of literacy through whole language in a tenth-grade language arts classroom provides a divergent view of the development of literacy. As such, whole language becomes the vehicle for a number of paradigm changes. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are viewed as infused rather than linear. Literacy is defined not only as the ability to read and to write, but also as the ability to think critically and to use one's knowledge base in the solving of problems.

The active learning environment of the whole language community of learners supports students and in the use of prior knowledge, in the use of inquiry, in the development of metacognition and in the development of positive attitudes. The elements of a whole language classroom support the development of the following workplace literacy skills: "the ability to process information; the ability to communicate effectively; the ability to work collaboratively in groups; and the ability to use self-regulated, creative, and critical thinking" (Marzano, 1992).

The search for a literacy experience that will transfer to the workplace must be based on these basic beliefs as expressed by Tierney, Carter, and Desai (1991):

teachers are capable professionals who have the capacity to facilitate the intellectual and emotional growth in students; students can learn to think for themselves and how to educate themselves over the course of their lives; reading and writing are not only essential survival skills in this society but are also pathways for a lifelong educational process, for self-expression, and for socio-economic survival, political and personal empowerment; diversity is not only inevitable, it is also desirable; and the key word in the relationship between teachers is respect.

Additional studies need to examine the following questions:

1. How does the theory of multiple intelligences impinge on whole language?
2. Do teachers need training in whole language to successfully empower students to become members in a community of learners?
3. Do students need experience with whole language to be successful members in a community of learners?
4. Can students successfully identify their changing needs throughout their literacy development and appropriately self-assess their growth?
5. Can students successfully use alternative methods of social interaction to identify and assess their literacy development?
6. How can students successfully collaborate in a multicultural learning

environment to solve problems?

7. Can students use their developing literacy in a whole language environment to augment their social interactions as citizens in a global community of learners?
8. What is the role of assessment for the secondary teacher-researcher in the language arts classroom using a whole language curriculum?
9. What is the role of the secondary student-researcher in the language arts classroom using whole language?
10. What is the role of assessment in lifelong literacy development?
11. What is the role of self-assessment and self-reflection in life-long literacy development?

The answers to these questions will enable the restructuring of education toward a coherent curriculum that integrates instruction and assessment. They also will encourage the creation of active learning environments in which to be authentic in problem solving, and support continued research in interactive learning and instruction.



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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### Interview Questions

Persons who will be interviewed include the division superintendent, the area associate superintendent (who is responsible for this high school), the supervisor for language arts, the building principal, and the director of the reading lab at the high school. They will be asked the following questions: (a) What are the critical attributes of a performance-based assessment, as it is described in the reading/writing workshop model, that support the successful development of a student as a reflective learner? (b) How does a student's perception of himself or herself as a learner affect literacy development?

Focused interviews with the teachers and twenty-two students in the English class form the fulcrum of the bounded system. The two teachers will be interviewed at the beginning of this study and at the conclusion.

Each of the twenty-two students will be interviewed by asking the following questions:

1. How old are you and what grade are you in?
2. How long have you been at this school?
3. Where did you attend middle school?
4. Describe any memories you have of past English classes either in elementary or middle school? How were they designed? What kinds of

writing did you do? How did you learn grammar? What kinds of tests did you have and how did you learn the information for the test? What happened to this information after you learned it for the test? What kinds of things did you read? How were you assessed over what you had read?

5. Why did you take this class?
6. How is this class different from any English class that you have taken before?
7. What kinds of things have you read this year? Do you have a particular author that you like? How has this author's style of writing affected your writing? Have you experience being able to "climb inside a book and visualize the action as if you were one of the characters?" - When did this happen? How have your reading skills improved? How has reading in this class affected your reading at home? - in other classes? How are you assessed over what you read? How do the reading letters function as an evaluation tool? What will you be reading this summer?
8. What kinds of things have you written this year? What is your favorite piece? - Why? How do you learn grammar? How do you keep track of the skills that you learn? What is a mini-lesson and how does this form of learning information differ from other classes that you have taken in school? Describe an editing conference? - with a teacher? - with a peer? How has your thinking changed because of this class? How do you learn writing skills and apply them? How has your writing been affected in other classes?
9. How do you get a grade in this class? On what is that grade based?
10. How have you changed as a speaker this year because of this class?
11. How have you changed as a listener this year because of this class?
12. Have your parents noticed a difference in your English skills this year?
13. What will you do want to do in the future?
14. What are you going to do this summer?
15. What kind of English class will you take next year?
16. Do you think other classes should be designed this way?

## Appendix B

## Scoring Guide

## COMPOSING

1	2	3	4	x 5 = _____
Try again. Ideas are very weak. Go back to brainstorming.	I had to read your paper over and over to understand it. You need another draft.	Good work. No problems understanding your main idea. Spend some more time support it.	Yes! You focused on your main idea and supported it very well. Great work!	

## STYLE

1	2	3	4	x 5 = _____
Try again. I can't hear your voice at all in the piece. Add more specific detail.	You're having trouble with word choice. Look for some more vivid words.	Looking good. Stay away from generalizations. Show, don't tell.	Vivid, surprising words. Concrete word pictures. Good! I can hear you loud and clear in this piece.	

## SENTENCE FORMATION

1	2	3	4	x 3 = _____
See me soon! You're having some trouble putting your sentences together.	You've got a lot of fragments, run-ons, or comma splices. Check your notes for rules about joining sentences together.	A few fragments, run-ons, or comma splices. Make sure you use conjunctions correctly.	No problems with your sentences Good work!	

## USAGE

1	2	3	4	x 2 = _____
See me about your tenses, and subject-verb agreement. Make sure you know what your words mean!	There are a few problems with your verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, or possessives. Self-edit more carefully!	You almost have it. Check your tenses when you self-edit.	Good job! Your subjects/verbs agree, and you kept the same tense throughout the piece.	

## MECHANICS

1	2	3	4	x 2 = _____
Self-edit more carefully. Too many errors. See me for help.	You've got problems with your spelling and/or punctuation. Self-edit carefully.	Not bad self-editing. There are a couple of things you missed.	Excellent self-editing! Very few problems with spelling.	

## REQ'S

1	2	3	4	x 4 = _____
Try this assignment again. Read the instructions once more.	You haven't given me all that I've asked for. Read the assignment more carefully.	good work. You followed instructions well and included most of what I asked for.	Excellent Job! You paid close attention to the details of the assignment. No complaints!	

## Comments:

The English 10 Syllabus for this class is based on the following performance-based standards:

## Appendix C

## Writing Workshop

## 1. Learn and follow workshop routines. (1/6)

- A - Always abides by workshop procedures and class rules, and is consistently prepared for workshop conferences.
- B - Almost always abides by workshop procedures and class rules, and is somewhat consistent in preparation for workshop conferences.
- C - Usually abides by workshop procedures and class rules, and is somewhat inconsistent in preparation for workshop conferences.
- D - Rarely abides by workshop procedures and class rules, and is very inconsistent in preparation for workshop conferences.
- F - Never abides by workshop procedures and class rules, and is unprepared for workshop conferences.

## 2. Participate actively in workshop routines. (1/6)

- A - Always actively participates in the writing, revision, editing, and sharing phases of the workshop (both as an individual writer and as a peer evaluator); and consistently takes notes.
- B - Almost always actively participates in the writing, revision, editing, and sharing phases of the workshop (both as an individual writer and as a peer evaluator); and is somewhat consistent in taking notes.
- C - Usually participates in the writing, revision, editing, and sharing phases of the workshop (both as an individual writer and as a peer evaluator); and is somewhat inconsistent in taking notes.
- D - Rarely participates in the writing, revision, editing, and sharing phases of the workshop (either as an individual writer or as a peer evaluator); and is very inconsistent in taking notes.
- F - Never participates in the writing, revision, editing, and sharing phases of the workshop (either as an individual writer or as a peer evaluator); and does not take notes.

3. Demonstrate progress toward the following 1st 9-weeks goals: (1/6)

- Finding a topic
  - Presenting the topic with clarity and grace
  - Implementing necessary revisions and editing components
  - Spending an appropriate amount of time and effort on a piece
  - Consecutively higher degree of risk-taking and initiative displayed
  - Developing critical thinking skills in writing evaluation
  - Demonstrates progress in achieving personal goals agreed upon by the student and teacher
- A - Always demonstrates consistent and acceptable progress toward mastery of workshop and personal goals.
- B - Almost always demonstrates consistent and acceptable progress toward mastery of workshop and personal goals.
- C - Usually demonstrates consistent and acceptable progress toward mastery of workshop and personal goals.
- D - Rarely demonstrates consistent and acceptable progress toward mastery of workshop and personal goals.
- F - Never demonstrates consistent and acceptable progress toward mastery of workshop and personal goals.

### Reading Workshop

The Student Will:

4. Write a one page letter to the teacher each week talking about your book. (1/6)
5. Participate (1/6)
6. Demonstrate progress toward the following 1st 9-weeks goals by: (1/6)
- Choosing books of interest
  - Daily reading in and out of school
  - Letter writing that shows critical thinking and effort
  - Demonstrating progress in achieving personal goals agreed upon by the student and teacher
- A - Always demonstrates consistent and acceptable progress toward



mastery of workshop and personal goals.

- B - Almost always demonstrates consistent and acceptable progress toward mastery of workshop and personal goals.
- C - Usually demonstrates consistent and acceptable progress toward mastery of workshop and personal goals.
- D - Rarely demonstrates consistent and acceptable progress toward mastery of workshop and personal goals.
- F - Never demonstrates consistent and acceptable progress toward mastery of workshop and personal goals.

## Appendix D

## Grade Distribution

The grade distribution for the first quarter was as follows:

	Average 10th graders	At-risk 10th graders
A	5	3
B+		3
B	8	3
C+	1	1
C	3	
D+		1
D	1	3
F		1

## Appendix E

## Final Assessment

## Section I: Writing Process

Answer the two questions below.

1. In approximately one page of writing, explain the steps we go through in developing pieces of writing.
2. Look back through your collection of writings. Choose the piece you believe is your best work, and in approximately one page of writing, explain what makes it your best.
3. Explain why it is important for writers to conference.
4. The listener's task during a writing conference is to help the writer move to the next draft with information that will help him or her improve the piece. Write a paragraph in which you explain how to help the writer.
5. Explain the difference between a content and an editing conference.
6. Why do writer's write drafts of paragraphs?
7. We have discussed several kinds of writing this year: personal narrative, idea writing, opinion writing, letter writing, and fiction. Look back through your collection of writings. Then tell what genre of writing you usually do and why you chose this type. Tell what type you avoid and why.
8. Look at your skill sheet and tell the skills where you have improved the most.
9. Explain which steps of the writing process you find the most difficult and why.
10. Choose a response to one of the above questions and edit that response.

**Section II: Reading**

1. In one page summarize the plot of one of the books that you have read this year.
2. Choose one of the books that you have read and explain the theme or main idea.
3. Consider the books that you have read and explain what kinds of books you prefer and why.
4. Choose one book and tell about the main character.
5. Look at your notes on the structure of the novel and tell where the climax of your novel occurred.
6. Tell about the setting of one book.
7. Read the lead of your current novel and explain the effectiveness of the author's lead.
8. Look over this exam and tell me which of your responses is the best and why. Give reasons for your beliefs. Conclude this paragraph with a statement about what your grade should be and why.

## Appendix F

### Self-Editing

#### When To Do It?

When you have written at least two drafts, have self-conferenced, have peer and/or teacher conferenced, and are satisfied with the content of your piece. (What it says.)

#### How To Do It?

Use a pen or pencil that is different in color from your draft. Correct all errors that you can find. (Spelling, punctuation, awkwardness...)

#### Then What??

Drop your edited piece in the box labeled "Ready for Teacher Editing". You will have an editing conference with the teacher during the next writing workshop day.